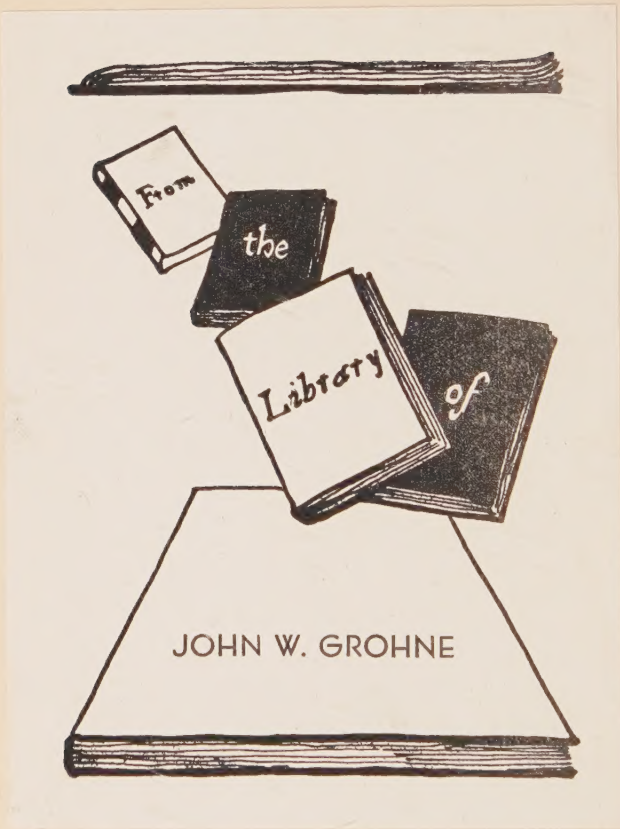
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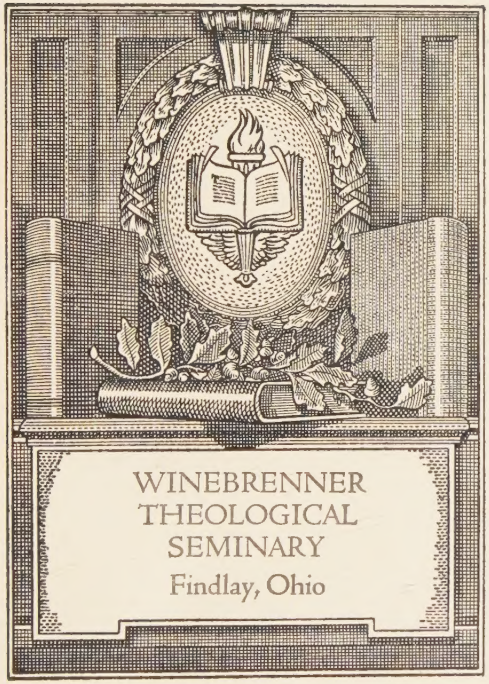

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Story and Significance
of
The Augsburg Confession

on Its Four Hundredth Anniversary

by
DR. J. L. NEVE
Professor of History of Doctrine in
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1930
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Burlington, Iowa

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ERRATA.

Page 3—Read last line as last line of Page 4.

Page 48—Line 10, put period after Augsburg. Continue: On May 22nd. Melanchthon, etc.

Page 48—Lines 16 and 23, insert "doctrinal" between "17" and "articles."

Page 63—Line 25, insert in parenthesis Page 83.

Page 85—Line 2 from below read 1586.

Page 78—Line 3 read "Baumgaertner."

PREFACE

On June the twenty-fifth of this year, there will be a large gathering of Lutherans from all lands in the historic old city of Augsburg, Germany. The purpose of this convention will be to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the public delivery of the Augsburg Confession.

This Confession has been fittingly called the Magna Charta of Protestantism. It was the first public Confession of Protestantism. In France the Lutheran Church is known as The Church of the Augsburg Confession. Whatever other Confessions may be accepted by Lutherans in different lands, all have in common this fundamental Confession of Lutheranism. At the time of its delivery at the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, the followers of Luther did not claim to be more than separate, individual congregations.[1] Each of the twenty-one doctrinal articles of the Confession, with the exception of only Articles 5 and 20, has in the opening sentence the phrase "Our churches do teach" and after that "also they teach." But after the delivery of the Confession the separate congregations felt themselves to be one church with a doctrinal bond of union.

Of unusual interest is the remark of Philip Schaff: The Augsburg Confession "will ever be cherished as one of the noblest monuments of faith from THE PENTECOSTAL PERIOD of Protestantism."[2] Yes, this document

[1] "Ecclesiae nostrae."
[2] **Creeds of Christendom, I, 235.**

was drafted when Lutheranism was still in the prophetic stage of its evolution. Later, in the Formula of Concord, we have the stage of larger theological reflection, which was a natural and even a necessary development. The Augsburg Confession was not really made for the purpose of serving as a creed. It consists of non-systematic statements which the fathers of our church were forced to make for their defense. But, as Schaff has also remarked: "It struck the keynote to other evangelical Confessions."

The author needs to make it clear that the contents of this little book are altogether different from two other books which he has written on the Augsburg Confession.[1] In both of those volumes the chief aim is, after only a brief historical introduction, to interpret the several articles of the Augsburg Confession. Here the writer has limited himself to the history and significance of the Confession.

There is a demand in this day for the popularization of all historical and theological matters. The writer's effort to attain lucidity of presentation is reflected in paragraphing, and in giving of key notes in brief superscriptions. But one can be so popular in style that the issues have to be dodged. The title of this book calls for a review of the actual history of the Augsburg Confession and also for a discussion of some of its confessional principles.[2] Different from the Catechism,

[1] **"The Augsburg Confession"** (dedicated to the laymen; 160 pages, United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia, Pa., 1914); and **"A Guide to the Study of the Augsburg Confession and its Theology"** (for theological students; 226 pages, Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, Ohio, 1927, a revised and supplemented reprint of pp. 115-307 of his "Introduction to the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church," 2nd ed., 1927).

[2] Compare especially chapter X.

the Augsburg Confession may be treated only in connection with the history and theology of the Lutheran Church.

The student of works on Comparative Symbolics will notice that in the last chapter (X), which treats of the doctrinal significance of the Confession, the author has departed from the traditional methods of discussion so as to include present-day problems and interests. The fact that this book is an anniversary volume warrants him in taking this liberty.

It is hoped that this book may serve as an aid to ministers, Luther Leaguers and others who may seek topics for addresses or lectures on the Augsburg Confession during this year of its four hundredth anniversary.

J. L. N.

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CONTENTS

Page

PREFACE V

CHAPTER I

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION IN THE LITERATURE OF THE LAST CENTURY AND TODAY 1

CHAPTER II

THE REFORMATION BETWEEN THE DIETS AT WORMS AND AT AUGSBURG 7

1. The Reformation Condemned By Both Church and State 7
   a. The Papal Bull 7
   b. The Emperor's Edict 8
   c. General Execution Impossible 8
2. The Reformation In Continued Progress 10
   a. The Bible in the Language of the People 10
   b. A Guide in Doctrinal Theology 10
   c. Wittenberg, the International University 11
   d. The Language of the Reformer 12
3. Separations and Eliminations 13
   a. Separation from Humanism 13
   b. Elimination of "Spiritualism" 14
4. Establishing the Reformation 16
   a. The Church Services 16
   b. The Breakdown at Monasticism 18
   c. Substitutes for Bishops (Temporary Church Government 19
   d. Religious Education (The Catechisms) 20

CHAPTER III

Page

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS PRECEDING THE AUGSBURG DIET 22
1. Political Interest In the Reformation..... 22
2. The Camps Organizing for Conflict..... 23
3. Waiting for the Emperor..... 24
4. Charles Was Ready for Action..... 26
5. Again the Emperor's Arm Is Checked..... 27
6. Calling of the Augsburg Diet..... 28

CHAPTER IV

CREATION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION 29
1. The Lutherans Prepare for Augsburg..... 29
2. Melanchthon's Fitness for Writing the Confession; His Peculiar Genius..... 31
3. Why Luther Was Left at Coburg..... 34
4. Earliest Work On the Confession..... 36
a. The Torgau Articles..... 36
b. The First "Preface" to the Confession..... 36
5. The Articles of Faith..... 38
a. Dr. Eck's Pamphlet..... 38
b. The Thought-Materials in the Doctrinal Articles (Sources): The Schwabach Articles, The Marburg Articles 39
The Persisting Differences..... 45
The Unconscious Difference 46
6. Development and Completion of the Augsburg Confession 48
7. How Much of the Confession Did Luther See? 51

Page
a. Interest In This Question..... 51
b. Luther Saw Only the "First Draft"..... 53
c. No Intention to Ignore Luther..... 53

CHAPTER V
THE DELIVERY OF THE CONFESSION..... 55
1. The Arrival of the Emperor..... 55
2. The Opening of the Diet..... 57
3. The Situation Dramatically Presented..... 58
4. The Confession Is Finished for Delivery..... 59
a. A Common Confession..... 59
b. The Responsible Parties..... 59
5. Final Meeting and Affixing of Signatures... 60
6. Public Reading of the Confession..... 61
a. Attempt to Prevent a Public Reading..... 61
b. The Public Reading of the Confession..... 63
c. The Emperor's Temporary Answer..... 65
d. Effect of the Reading of the Confession..... 66

CHAPTER VI
DEFENDING THE CONFESSION..... 69
1. Melanchthon's Attitude Following the Delivery of the Confession..... 69
2. Luther Upholding His Friends at Augsburg.. 70
3. The Romanists' Reply to the Augsburg Confession..... 72
a. Deliberations..... 72
b. Writing of the "Confutation"..... 73
c. Public Reading of the Confutation..... 74
d. Estimate of the Document..... 75
4. Melanchthon's Reply In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession..... 76

Page
a. Copy of "Confutation" Denied..... 76
b. Where Did Melanchthon Find the Remarkable Clarity of His Apology?..... 76
c. A Few Estimates of the Apology..... 78

CHAPTER VII

THE TEXTS OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION 80
1. What Became of the Two Copies Delivered at Augsburg? 81
a. What Became of the German Text?..... 81
b. What Became of the Latin Text?..... 82
2. What Do We Understand By the "Editio Princeps"? 82
3. The Text Used In Our English Lutheran Churches 84
The History of Our English Translations.....
4. The Editio Princeps Agrees Materially With the Originals 86
5. The Distinction Between An Altered and an Unaltered Augsburg Confession..... 87
a. Melanchthon's Practice of Changing the New Editions of the Confession..... 87
b. The Edition of 1540 and Its Successors (Variata): What Are the Changes In This Edition? Expression on Free Will and on the Lord's Supper. How to Interpret the Variation. First Attitude of the Lutherans Toward the Variata. The Lutherans Change Their

Page
Attitude Toward the Variata. What Lessons Should Be Derived from These Facts..... 88
Church of Today.....151

CHAPTER VIII

CHARACTER AND CONTENTS OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION 97
1. Characteristics 97
2. Outlines of the Contents.....100

CHAPTER IX

THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION FOR GERMANY.104
1. The Significance of the Confession From the Diet of Augsburg (1530) to the Religious Peace Treaty of Augsburg (1555).....104
2. The Significance of the Confession From 1555 to the End of the Thirty Years' War, 1648.107
3. The Political Significance Afteb the Thirty Years' War 108

CHAPTER X

THE DOCTRINAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION 111
1. The Augsburg Confession Must Not Be Isolated From the Other Writings In the Book of Concord 112
A Few Illustrations: (1) Man's Natural Depravity, (2) Justification and the New Obedience, (3) Lord's Supper.....

Page

2. With the Adoption of the Augsburg Confession the Lutheran Church Commits Herself to the Principle of Conservatism In All Theological Progress 116
(1) Regarding the Faith of the Ancient Church..119
(2) Regarding the Reformation.....120
(3) Objections Answered: a. Was the Reformation a Mistake? b. Did the Reformation Come Too Early? 121

3. The Augsburg Confession Is the Symbol of Lutheran Identity 125
(1) Examination of the Confessions.....125
(2) Should the Augsburg Confession Be Replaced By Luther's Writings?.....128
(3) The Denominational Situation: a. Lord's Supper 134
b. Other Differences: Baptism.....135
The "Kingdom" 137

4. The Augsburg Confession Is an Expression of Christian Catholicity 139
(1) It Is a Catholic Document: a. It Recognizes the Ecumenical Creeds, b. Also the Pauline Heritage from Augustine, c. It Preserves the Helpful Tradition from the Ancient Church.....139
(2) The Message of Article VII in the Augsburg Confession: a. The One Holy Church and the many Churches. b. A Very Significant Characterization. c. The Twice-Employed "Rightly." d. How Is It to Be Interpreted?.....141

Page
IN CONCLUSION: SURELY, THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION IS NOT JUST AN ANTIQUE. 149
1. It Expresses the Faith of a Past Generation... 149
2. But This Faith Has Meaning for the Lutheran Churches of Today..... 151

CHAPTER I

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION IN THE HISTORY OF THE PAST CENTURY AND TODAY

Before taking up the actual history and the discussion of the significance of the Augsburg Confession it will be desirable to devote a very brief introductory chapter to the causes which have stimulated the last century's large literature regarding this fundamental confessional document of the Reformation.

IN THE PAST CENTURY

Every hundredth anniversary of the delivery of the Augsburg Confession has offered occasion for new writings on this document. This can be strikingly visualized in a review of the literature prefaced to the article "Augsburger Bekenntnis" etc., by Theodor Kolde in Volume II of the "Protestantische Realencyklopaedie fuer Theologie und Kirche."[1] The anniversary of 1830, and the succeeding years, especially, yielded many writings on the Augsburg Confession. By this time a historic perspective had been gained that did not exist at the previous anniversary in 1730.

During the nineteenth century German Protestantism passed through decades of searching endeavors to re-evaluate the Reformation. This was primarily an undertaking of the theological liberalism of that day. There

[1]Compare Charles Porterfield Krauth, **"Conservative Reformation and its Theology,"** 1871, United Lutheran Publication House, page 212 ff., on **"Works Connected with the History of the Augsburg Confession, Chronologically Arranged."**

are references to these things in the chapters of this little book. For conservative Lutheranism it is impossible to accept the historical reconstructions and the findings of men like F. C. v. Baur, R. Rothe, A. Ritschl, W. Dilthy, E. Troeltsch and the historians of the Anabaptist persuasion.

The year 1830 found the Lutheran Church of Germany ready to appreciate her fundamental Confession in opposition to two factors. The one was "vulgar Rationalism" breathing its last, but revived to new forms of existence by the influence of philosophical and poetical idealism. The other was the movement for a church union between Lutherans and Reformed, of the absorptive type, which was dominating in the years between 1817 and 1834.[2]

The conflict with modern rationalism gave the Lutheran Church a great stimulus for study of the Augsburg Confession and the other confessional writings. The doctrinal and religious treasures of our church were pointed out in a very effective manner by a long line of great scholars, many of which have been mentioned in referring to the literature in this anniversary writing.

Against the men of the Union, on the other hand, there followed a reemphasis of the old distinction between a "historic" Lutheranism, such as prevailed in the Formula of Concord, and a milder "Melanchthonian" type which favored the Union and was declined or distrusted by the conservatives for that reason. In America also, because of the influence from Germany through immigration and literature, the same conflict appeared.

[2] Cf. the writer's book, **"The Lutherans in the Movements for Church Union,"** 1921, pp. 116-119.

This angle of estimating the Augsburg Confession largely dictated the topics of discussion during the century that now lies behind us. The "Melanchthonians" found themselves in a critical attitude toward the specifically Lutheran influences and for that reason were opposed to the Smalcald Articles and especially to the Formula of Concord, refusing also the distinction between an "altered" and an "unaltered" Augsburg Confession.[3] The other side, in line with the development of historic Lutheranism, insisted that we cannot do justice to the confessional burden of the Augsburg Confession by isolating this document from the rest of the confessional writings of Lutheranism, but that its meaning for the Lutheran Church must be found in the legitimate development of its principles as expressed in the whole Book of Concord. It must be remembered, however, that all this has reference to the Lutheranism of Germany and its propagation in America. In Germany it had its explanation in the struggle of the Lutheran Church with Calvinism in the post-Reformation period and in the revival of confessional Lutheranism during the second third of the last century. The strong waves of immigration in those years carried the conflict into North America where it was taken up by English as well as German Lutherans. This problem had much to do with developing the types of Lutheran bodies in America. The Scandinavians, following their own traditions, as a rule have not had the same interest in these matters. But there was an inner historical and practical logic and necessity in this whole conflict.[4]

preparation between 1844 and 1855. That plan of Union

[3]On this distinction see Chapter VI, 4.
[4]For further reading relative to this see Chapter X, "Thesis One."

In Germany, the Lutheran Church did not everywhere maintain the original opposition against the Union. Two reasons may be given for this: (1) With few exceptions, as for instance in the Rhine Provinces, the Reformed were few in numbers. These were frequently more Melanchthonian than genuine Calvinists. They have been in a process of practical absorption by the Lutheran Church. (2) The new theological liberalism, which had received its start from Lessing and Kant, from certain principles of Schleiermacher and in a certain direction from Hegel, Strauss and Biedermann, appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century in the garb of the Ritschlian (New-Kantian) system. It presented itself as a "Lutheran theology of experience." This peculiar theology forced the conservative theologians of Germany for more than a generation into a life and death struggle for the historic positions of the Reformation. In this whole conflict the specifically confessional orientation lost much of the emphasis of the previous decades.

In America, the Lutheran Church was surrounded by the influences of Calvinism and Arminianism. There were those among the Lutherans of that day who were ready to make concessions. Their ideal was "a Lutheranism modified by the Puritan (Presbyterian) element," in other words a Church Union such as had taken place in Germany in 1817. Others went on "a visit with the Methodists" in search for "new measures" in place of the old practice of catechetical instruction to build up the Church. There was even an attempt to alter the Augsburg Confession for the gradual accomplishment of an "Apostolic Protestant Union." We are thinking of the "Definite Synodical Platform" which had been in

was endorsed by the General Synod in 1845. The Lutheran Church in America at that time was in danger of absorption by the Reformed Church family.[5] It was the conflict in this situation that was constantly stimulating confessional interest. The theologians in and outside of the General Synod who were leading in this struggle for historic Lutheranism were conscious of shouldering a great responsibility. They wanted to safeguard the foundations for a Lutheran Church on this continent which was then in the process of establishing herself under the English language. It was in this conflict with that so-called "American Lutheranism" that, by co-operation between the General Synod, the General Council and the United Synod South, the foundations were laid, which today constitute the practical guides of the United Lutheran Church in hymnology, liturgy, ministerial acts, and catechetical teaching. Here we have a practical execution of a real application of the principles of the Augsburg Confession. To this was added (1920) the "Washington Declaration" on Church, Church Relations, and Church Co-operation.

FUTURE PROBLEMS

There are serious demands upon the Lutheran Church in America today. We shall refer to these in two directions. (1) Theological liberalism is knocking on our doors for admission. This means that we must meet opponents which were not in the field when the Augsburg Confession was written. In this task the conservative theologians feel themselves confronted with new and multiplying problems. The contribution of the

[5]See our **"Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America,"** 2nd ed., 1916, pp. 113-148.

English literature of our day is large and valuable indeed. But we must be prepared to follow also the contributions to the solution of these new problems by the scholars of European Lutheranism. These men of Lutheran background have an angle of approach and a method of work which are bound to be of special help to us. Let us remind ourselves that even in dealing with the modern questions of Protestant theology we must not separate ourselves from the orientation by our own confessional heritage as we have it in the historic unfolding of the principles of the Augsburg Confession. (2) We are in another day of union movements. There is a constantly growing literature on the denominational problems. The universities of our land offer courses on this subject, they establish professorships to deal with it, and they encourage their graduate students to write dissertations following the method of the "psychoanalysis" of the denominations of Christendom. In an age of such interests the Lutherans surely ought to understand themselves as a church, their own doctrinal genius, the principles upon which they are established. What matters today ought not to have the emphasis it had four hundred years ago? Which things today as well as in the past compel us to say: Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise? Let us find our bearings on these problems by a new study of the Augsburg Confession. In such an endeavor this book would serve as a guide.

CHAPTER II

THE REFORMATION BETWEEN THE DIETS AT WORMS AND AT AUGSBURG

The reader will understand that even this second chapter is intended as an introduction to the succeeding chapters of this book. It does not deal with the Augsburg Confession. But it describes a section in the history of the Reformation which reveals many of the roots of this first public Confession of Protestantism. The brief period from about the time of the nailing of the Ninety-Five Theses on the castle church door at Wittenberg (1517) to Luther's journey to Worms (1521) was highly prophetic in character; but it must be said that the nine years between the diet at Worms (1521) and the diet at Augsburg (1530) represent a period in which the real foundations for the Reformation were laid. The Augsburg Confession then, recorded the doctrinal experience of these nine fundamental years. A brief review of the events in these years will prepare us for a better understanding of the Story of the Augsburg Confession and its Significance.

1. THE REFORMATION CONDEMNED BY BOTH CHURCH AND STATE

a. The Papal Bull

On January 2, 1521, Pope Leo X announced that Luther was under the condemnation of the papal bull

which had been issued June 15, 1520.[1] The time that was allowed him to revoke his "41 errors" had passed. The announcement demanded the immediate apprehension of Luther and his followers, and it declared that any country that would offer him shelter would thereby place itself under the "edict of public prohibition." The unexpected invitation of Emperor Charles V to Luther to appear before the diet at Worms and to give account of himself was not desired at Rome.

b. The Emperor's Edict

After Luther had been heard at Worms, April 18, before adjournment of the diet, on May 28, the emperor pronounced the edict of the empire against him, demanding his delivery to the civil authorities. He was spoken of as the devil in human form, as an advocate of doctrines that lead to sedition and murder and to a life of license. His writings must be destroyed. The governments were ordered, under severe penalties, to carry out this edict. Through all the nine years to the Augsburg Diet the Romanists, supported by pope and emperor, insisted upon the execution of the "Worms Edict." It was this edict that held the Lutheran party on the defensive and made it impossible for Luther to appear personally at the diet in Augsburg.

c. General Execution Impossible

Why was it not possible to carry out this edict? We know the thrilling story of Luther's abduction to the Wartburg. This had been planned by his elector Frederick the Wise, who, at that time at least, was not yet

[1] We know this document under the name "Exsurge domine." See **Luther's Works, Erlangen Ed.** 4, 259ff., **Mirbt, Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums,** 4th ed., 257.

an outspoken follower of Luther. But he acted in entire harmony with the attitude of multitudes of the German people toward the hero of the Reformation. Albrecht Duerer expressed the feeling of the people when at the news of Luther's disappearance he exclaimed: "Oh God, Luther is dead! Who shall now preach to us the Gospel with his clarity? What might he not have written in ten or twenty years! Help me to weep over the loss of this God-filled man and pray that the Lord may send us another messenger of his inspiration."[2] And even among the princes Luther had his sympathizers. No lesser one than Emperor Maxmillian I (died 1519), predecessor of Charles V, wrote to the elector of Saxony that he should watch diligently over his monk, for there might come the occasion when they would need him.[3] In his great reformatory writings of 1520, especially in the one addressed to the Nobility of the German Nation, and in his deliverance on the Babylonian Captivity of the Church, Luther had protested the cause of the German people against Roman exploitation. A study of the Reformation as reflected in the dramatic literature of the sixteenth century would give us illustrations of Luther's general popularity at that time.[4] Here is one of the chief reasons why the cry of the Roman party for the execution of the Worms Edict was generally ignored. It was only where the princes were determined adherents of the Roman religion that we have reports of persecution. This was especially after the uprising of the

[2]Quoted by **K. A. v. Hase, Kirchengeschichte,** 1896, Part III, Sect. 1, p. 67.

[3]Hase, p. 57.

[4]See numbers 14 and 15 of the "Schriften des Vereins fuer Reformationgeschichte": **Hugo Holstein, Die Reformation im Spiegelbilde der dramatischen Literatur des 16. Iahrhunderts, 1886.**

peasants. We read of such persecution by Duke George in Saxony, by the Duke of Bavaria, in Austria-Bohemia, in the Netherlands and in Holstein.[5]

2. THE REFORMATION IN CONTINUED PROGRESS

a. The Bible in the Language of the People

On the 21st of September, 1522, Luther's German translation of the New Testament appeared in print. It sold rapidly. By December a new edition was needed. The common folks bought it, read it, memorized its passages, and troubled their priests with "heretical" questions. The Old Testament appeared in sections. In a few years all was finished and the Germans had the whole Bible in their own language. Furthermore, the language of the Bible soon became the common language for all German books so that there was now a convenient literary channel for the circulation of the many writings through which Luther and his co-workers communicated Gospel truths to the people. We are thinking here of his sermons. Especially the "Postilla" (of 1525), and the many sermons that were copied by his hearers and published with and without his knowledge.[6]

b. A Guide in Doctrinal Theology (Melanchthon's Loci)

The writing of these "Loci" had much to do with preparing Melanchthon for his later task of becoming the author of the Augsburg Confession. Melanchthon, the very scholarly co-laborer of Luther, had a remarkable

[5]Compare the Church Histories; **J. Koestlin, Martin Luther,** 5th ed., revised by Kawerau, to be quoted **Koestlin-Kawerau,** I, 615f., cf. 616, 720.
[6]Koestlin-Kawerau, as quoted, I, 562ff.; **A. Graebner, Dr. Martin Luther,** 1883, p. 301ff.

gift for formulating and stating in clear language the teachings of the Reformation. This he did in a little book published in 1521 which was written in Latin under the title "Loci," that is "Leading Conceptions," in German: "Leitbegriffe." This grew out of his interpretation of Paul's Letter to the Romans. In the Introduction to this book he insisted that the Scriptures alone, unmixed with philosophy, establish articles of faith. He dwelt on the combination of the ideas involved in justification and the new repentance such as law and gospel, sin and grace. Faith he considered to be trust, not mere assent to something known. At the close he gave the evangelical conception of the Church. This little book which is said to have gone through about eighty printings and a number of revised editions during the life of its author became the most valuable guide for establishing truly evangelical conceptions among the clergy who were called to lead the congregations. Luther praised it as being "immortal and worthy of admission into the canon."[7] A leading Roman theologian, J. Cochlaeus, said that because of the superior beauty of Melanchthon's style and his skill in the quotation of Scripture this book was "more pernicious than even Luther's writing on the 'Babylonian Captivity.'"[8]

c. Wittenberg, the International University

It was his sense of justice that had led Frederick the Wise to protect Luther. But he had also a special reason for protecting him from his enemies: Luther was the favorite professor in his Wittenberg University which had become the spiritual center of interest for so large

[7]See his Works, Latin, Erl. Ed. 7, 717.
[8]**Confutatio adv. Did. Faventium,** 1534, last page.

a part of the Church. To hear Luther and Melanchthon and to learn the Gospel the students of that day were streaming together from all countries. "Coming in from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, from the Baltic provinces, from Poland, Hungary, from France and England we find all these coming teachers and preachers of their respective countries at the feet of Luther as his pupils in the Faith. If Melanchthon was praised as the teacher of Germany (praeceptor Germaniae), so we may praise Luther as the great witness-confessor of Europe's Christianity. From the fire that he had started his disciples carried the sparks with them into their homelands."[9] No wonder the Elector of Saxony was not willing to let his famous professor fall a victim of the Worms Edict.

d. The Language of the Reformer

It must have been impressive to hear the voice of that Wittenberg prophet, as for instance, in his wonderful appeal to the city governments all over the land (1524), when he wrote: "I judge that Germany has never had so much of God's Word as it has now. But if we let that pass without the proper concern, then there is reason to fear that more terrible darkness will fall upon us. Dear Germans, buy while the market is before the door. Gather while the sun shines and the weather is good. Use God's grace and His Word while it is there. For this I will tell you: The Word of God is like heavy showers which do not come back to the same place. It came to the Jews, but gone is gone; now they have nothing. Paul brought it to Greece, but gone is gone; now

[9]Dr. A. Spaeth, in an address at the Allg. Ev. Luth. Konferenz at Rostock, September 29, 1904; Cf. **J. Mathesius, Dr. Martin Luthers Leben,** Reclam. Ed., p. 157f.

they have the Turk. Rome and the Latin countries also had it, but gone is gone; now they have the pope. And you Germans must not think that you will always have it; the general ungratefulness and spirit of contempt will not let it stay. Therefore, take it and hold what you can take and hold. Lazy hands are bound to have a poor year."[10]

3. SEPARATIONS AND ELIMINATIONS

There were movements, some of a semi-worldly sort (humanism), some of a radical type (spiritualism), that accompanied or grew out of the age of the Reformation. They were partly foreign, partly subversive to the specifically religious and conservative Reformation of Luther. The necessity of disavowing them filled quite a few of the nine years between Worms and Augsburg with conflict and literary labor.

a. Separation From Humanism

Luther, in his distinctly religious aims which were centered in the one question, What shall I do to be saved? had refused perseveringly to identify himself with the humanists, such as Francis von Sickingen and Ulrich von Hutten. The orientation of the humanists was in the renaissance. The ills of the age were to be overcome by a regeneration through the spirit of classicism, through the cultivation of the letters and of the arts. Luther had a high appreciation of what the humanists were doing for the languages and delighted in their blows against scholasticism, but he disliked their mixing religion with paganism. They were popular in the circles of the cultured in all countries. Reuchlin and

[10]Erl. Ed. 22, 175f.; Weimar Ed. 15 (9), 27ff.

Erasmus were spoken of as the "two eyes of Germany." Melanchthon had been under the influence of both of these men. But the separation of the Reformation from humanism was bound to come. It came in 1524 soon after the above-mentioned refusal of Luther to make common cause with the Knights. The growing aversion of Erasmus to Luther's reformation had reached the point that he, in his writing on free will,[11] began open controversy with Luther and defended Roman semi-pelagianism against Luther's emphasis upon man's spiritual inability to contribute anything in his own natural powers to his salvation. Luther replied to Erasmus in a writing on man's "bound will" (1525).[12] In this most remarkable reply to Erasmus Luther revealed the Augustinian character of his theology. We must keep this writing in mind if we want to understand Article 18 of the Augsburg Confession and the related materials in the Book of Concord.

b. Elimination of "Spiritualism"

The Lutheran Reformation stood for a religion of objective facts with the source of the knowledge of these in the Word of Scripture. This external Word was accepted as the living, vital truth for the spiritual influence upon the hearts of men. This Word, written and preached, is the Gospel of promise and forgiveness of sins. Likewise in the sacraments it is a means of grace. Against this teaching there appeared simultaneously with the Reformation a theology of "Spiritualism" with the criticism that Luther was bringing only a half-way reformation. While removing the pope, they said he had

[11]Opp. 9, 1215ff.; German in Walch Ed. of **Luther's Works** 18, 1962ff.
[12]Walch Ed. 18, 2049ff.; Erl. Ed. 7, 113ff.; Weimar Ed. 18, 551, 600ff.

erected in the Bible another outward authority. The Bible was declared to be nothing but an empty letter, at best "a witness of the inner word." The Spirit was to be the teacher. The Bible would become "the Word" only if man would read it with proper preparation of a spiritual nature. Thus confusing the need of a response in man with the Word itself, the Word of God was taught to be in man. In the endeavor at these distinctions the gradual progress from speaking of the Spirit of God in man (Muenzer, Thamer, Weigel) was but natural and exactly what Luther had predicted.

Thus, there was general opposition to fixed doctrines. Luther's doctrine of justification was spoken of with much contempt. It was said to have opened the door for all kinds of sins. There was objection to Luther's emphasis upon man's natural depravity, which was thought to weaken man in his own efforts. The stress was upon man's personal experience. Christ had not suffered for our redemption, but just to give us an example. His suffering helps us only if we act in suffering as Christ did.

The sacraments were looked upon as empty ceremonies; at best as symbolizing a baptism by the Spirit, or, in the case of the Supper, as suggesting an inner communion of the soul with Christ. They were regarded as belonging to the childhood of the Church; now we have to do with weightier matters: with faith and repentance. The baptism of infants, particularly, was seen as an initiation into the pope's church. As a sacrament it was declared to be a magic of no avail. The cry was, away with the outward church, with forms of worship,

with the office of the ministry; the true Church is a matter of the Spirit!

Luther soon saw that he had to separate his cause from this theology of the "inner light." He did it in decisive writings against Karlstadt, Muenzer and (later) against Schwenkfeld.[13] The conflict began with the Wittenberg disturbances which caused Luther to leave the Wartburg (1522). His larger Catechism has distinct references to it. Even in his last writing on the Lord's Supper (1544) it occupied his mind.[14] Article 5 of the Augsburg Confession expresses its real burden in a rejection of "the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost cometh to them without the external Word, through their own preparations and works" and opposes them with the teaching that "through the Word and Sacraments as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who worketh faith where and when it pleaseth God in them that hear the Gospel."

4. ESTABLISHING THE REFORMATION

a. The Church Services

The first followers of Luther were individuals. But soon there were congregations. These were in need of new forms and guides for their religious services. In 1525 Luther published his "Order of Service in the Congregation."[15] His aim was to remove the legendary elements and to substitute things in harmony with the Word of God. In the selection of proper materials he was guided by his characteristic conservatism. Only

[13]Erl. Ed. 29, 134ff.; W. Ed. 15, 380; Cf. Walch 15, 245ff. As to the large expression in Luther's letters on this subject see all the sources as indicated by Koestlin-Kawerau I, pp. 792, Notes 684; 688, 2; 695.

[14]Erl. Ed. 32, 396ff.; W. Ed. 54.

[15]W. Ed. 12, 205ff.

what is plainly in conflict with the Gospel was removed, such things as the mass and the worshipping of saints. Neither did he make laws out of the adiaphera.[16] He had a special interest in the general introduction of a service that would express all the essential elements in the language of the people.[17]

Particularly was it his desire to introduce German hymns to be sung by the congregation. He did his best to stimulate poets to create such songs. In this way he received the hymn of Paul Speratus "Es ist das Heil uns kommen her, Aus Gnad und lauter Guete." But we soon find Luther trying the art of religious poetry himself with the result that by 1524 the church of his name had 24 hymns composed by him, to which later 10 were added. Among the latter was "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott." Many of these were hymns of such a quality that they have continued to be counted among the best that Lutheran hymnology has produced.[18] The tunes for these hymns were taken from the best songs of the past. The historians have marveled to find how quickly these first songs of the Reformation were upon the lips of the people and what a vehicle they became for the dissemination of the Gospel.

So we see the Reformation in constant progress. In passing, we but mention Luther's publication of a German form for baptism (1523). The act of exorcism

[16]See Article 15 of the Augsburg Confession.

[17]Cf. Art. 24.

[18]For a brief review of them all see Koestlin-Kawerau 5th ed., I, 539ff., and his reference to further literature on the subject: the editions by Wackernagle, Schneider and Danneil; especially **Wackern, Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der aeltesten Zeit** 3, 3ff.; Luther's Works, Erl. Ed. 56, 289ff.; **Schleussner, Luther als Dichter,** 1883; **Achelis, Die Entstehungszeit von Luthers geistlichen Liedern,** 1884; **P. Bachmann in Zeitschrift fuer Kirchl. Wiss. und Leben,** 1884, 151ff., 294ff.; **Allg. Ev. Luth. Kchz.** 1894, 104ff.

was here retained.[19] By gradual elimination the practice in the administration of the Lord's Supper was purified of all the objectionable features of the Roman mass. It became the culminating part of the regular church worship with the assembled congregation. Thus the many side-altars disappeared. The absence of bishops for the ordination of priests led to emphasizing the call by the congregation as the chief element in the legitimation for the offices of the ministry. (Art. 14 of Augsburg Confession).

In 1523, Luther introduced the personal announcement of the individual for communion. The purpose was to give a very much needed opportunity to teach the ignorant and to keep them from lightly receiving the Body of the Lord (Art. 24). The forced auricular confession was removed, but the congregation was to be taught the value of "private absolution" (Art. 11).

All these things show that the articles of the Augsburg Confession grew out of an actual experience of the Church of the Reformation.

b. The Breakdown of Monasticism

The abandonment of monasticism, including the life of celibacy among priests, was the natural result of Luther's teaching that the monastic vows represent a self-chosen sanctity; especially, that marriage, instead of being on a lower ethical level, is a state pleasing to God from which the minister of the Gospel can not be barred. After much discussion of this matter between 1522 and 1525 Luther himself married. The result was that many of the cloisters became empty. We read of

[19]Erl. Ed. 22, 157ff.; W. Ed. 12, 38ff.

monastic vows and the marriage of priests in Articles 6 and 2 of Part II of the Augsburg Confession.

c. Substitutes for Bishops—Temporary Church Government

With the Roman bishops as opponents, how could there be an ordination of the many well trained candidates for the ministry who came from the Wittenberg University? This created no embarrassment because the Lutherans had learned to look upon the call by the congregation as the chief element in the legitimation for the office of the ministry (see Art. 14 of the A. C.) The first substitute for the abandoned Roman ordination was an act of installation into a special church office, such as was used in 1525 for the first time in Wittenberg.[20] The need of an act of ordination as an introduction into the office of the ministry for life was left as a matter to grow out of the new church's future development.

Still, there was need of a church government, of some basis for the authority which so far had been invested in the bishops. Many reform steps could be taken only with proper authority. What was more natural for Luther than to appeal to the Protestant princes to function as such an organ? These men were bearing the responsibility for the whole development. They had to sanction every forward step in the religious reform. And they were men of genuine piety. So the princes became bishops-in-need, "Notbischoefe" with the hope on the part of Luther that some day the right persons ("die rechten Haende") might be found for this office. Melanchthon, in Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession,

[20]Koestlin-Kawerau II, 22.

carefully defined the spheres of the power of the bishops and wrote from the standpoint of willingness to recognize them within Scriptural claims of authority. Later (1537), in that famous "Appendix" to the Smalcald Articles by Melanchthon, which Schaff calls "a theological masterpiece of his age," he reached the conclusion at which Luther had arrived long before, namely, that the Roman bishops as servants of the pope "should not be recognized by the churches as bishops." (Smalcald Articles § 79).

d. Religious Education

We now come to an act of the Reformation, back of which was the order and instruction of the Elector of Saxony, (John Frederick), now functioning with the authority of a bishop-in-need. It was in the years between 1525 and 1529 that official visitations of the churches were ordered to investigate their religious conditions and the remedies needed to meet the situation. These were conducted by Luther, Melanchthon, Spalatin, Bugenhagen, Agricola, Mykonius and others. The result was the discovery of an alarming state of affairs. The religious ignorance and moral laxity not only of the common people but also of many of the clergymen was appalling.

In order to meet the situation in an orderly way and to make these visitations as fruitful as possible, Melanchthon was instructed by the elector to draw up articles to guide the church officers and ministers and their superintendents in the needed reform. This document was published in 1528.[21] It was the first official

[21]The title was **"Unterricht der Visitatoren als die Pfarrherren im Kurfuerstentum zu Sachsen."** See its text in the **Corpus Reformatorum** XXVI, 41ff.; cf. **Richter, Kirchenordnungen I,** 82ff.

form for teaching the fundamentals of the Christian religion. As such it was a predecessor to the Catechism and to the Augsburg Confession. But as a church order (Kirchenordnung) it dealt also with principles for the Christian life and public education. The creation of this document belonged to the permanently functioning elements in the evolution of the Reformation. The writing of this document, like the Loci, prepared Melanchthon for the authorship of the Augsburg Confession.

The other still more important factor in the great effort of laying the foundation for Christian education was the publication of Luther's Catechism which was the great event in the following year (1529). The Small Catechism contributed especially, without intention, to the general growth of the consciousness that the teaching of the Reformation was not an heretical aberration but the true Christian Catholic religion in its purity. The entire Augsburg Confession rests upon this conviction.

All these steps in completing and establishing the Reformation, which we have aimed to trace, show that the Lutheran cause had become a very powerful movement. Will the political strength of Romanism be able to put a stop to it?

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS PRECEDING THE AUGSBURG DIET

1. POLITICAL INTEREST IN THE REFORMATION

It may be difficult for many in America, the land of absolute religious freedom and absolute separation between Church and State, to see why it was necessary for the statesmen in Germany and Europe to be so intensely interested in the religious question. But in that age religion controlled the political situation of the countries. Even today, why is the strengthening of Roman Catholicism a question of life for the new Poland? For the simple reason that it is very difficult for Protestants to be loyal to all the interests of an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country; just as difficult as it is for Protestant people in Transylvania to be enthusiastic over their new citizenship in the Eastern Orthodox state of Roumania. It meant much for Great Britain for all times, that in the critical years of her history England succeeded in keeping Rome from becoming the controlling religious factor; just as it meant much to the political tranquility of the Scandinavian countries that they succeeded in maintaining a confessional unity. The Germany of the past would have been spared all of her struggles with a "Centrist" party in the Reichstag if, in the counter-reformation, the Jesuits had not suc-

ceeded in bringing back a strong Roman Catholic faction. The France of today with so much hostility on the part of her leading classes toward any kind of religion finds herself nevertheless happy, politically, in this, that the Hugenot movement remained too weak to endanger seriously the confessional unity of the land which was secured by the survival of Roman Catholicism in that country.

Yes, all the princes of Germany were watching with an unabating interest the course of the Reformation movement. In fact there was no ruler in that day that could afford to be indifferent. Charles V, as emperor over an empire on which the sun did not set, and therefore at the head of world politics, was opposed to the Lutheran movement not just as a loyal son of the church, but chiefly because he had to rely upon Roman Catholicism as the cement to bind together all the different peoples of his vast possessions with one common religious interest.[1] With the Reformation this one bond of unity was beginning to break.

2. THE CAMPS ORGANIZING FOR CONFLICT

When, in 1530, Charles V called the Augsburg Diet, he hoped to settle the conflict over the Reformation. This conflict had been growing more acute especially in Germany and Austria since the war with the peasants in 1524-25. The Romanists among the princes who had succeeded in throwing down the revolt made use of the general feeling that the upheaval was the natural outgrowth of the Reformation. They now proceeded to

[1]See the work of his biographer, the Strassburg professor **H. Baumgarten, Geschichte Karls V,** 2 vols. Our reference here is to his smaller writing **Karl V und die deutsche Reformation,** No. 27 of the publications of the Verein fuer Reformationsgeschichte, p. 11.

organize among themselves for the purpose of extirpating "the root of this uproar, namely the damned Lutheran sect." Thus, at a meeting in Dessau, July 19, 1525, the leading spirit was Luther's avowed enemy, Duke George of Leipzig. During the year before, at Regensburg, the Romanist forces of the South, under the lead of the Duke of Bavaria, and stimulated by King Ferdinand of Austria, had federated themselves for a like purpose. Also to the West at Mayence (Nov. 14, 1525) the Romanists united to send a petition to both pope and emperor pleading for the uprooting of Lutheranism. The princes who met at Dessau sent a personal messenger to the emperor who as King of Spain resided at Madrid.

These events forced the Lutheran princes to organize for defense. So it came about, at first, that Elector Frederick and Philip, the young and energetic Landgrave of Hesse, met for a conference on Nov. 8, 1525, and agreed that they would stand together as one man for the Gospel and "against the Worms Edict." This agreement was reaffirmed in the "Torgau Federation" of February 27, 1526, and was soon materially strengthened by the accession of quite a number of other dominions and cities (Brunswick-Lueneburg, Brunswick-Grubenhagen, Mecklenburg, Anhalt, Mansfield, Magdeburg, Koenigsberg). There were also negotiations with Denmark and Sweden.

3. WAITING FOR THE EMPEROR

The Romanists were anxiously waiting for Emperor Charles to appear as their "savior" in this critical time. Since the diet at Worms (1521) he had not been in

Germany. He was King of Spain and the Netherlands with their foreign attachments in India and America, residing at Madrid. What had kept him from coming to Germany for another diet? Why was he not present at the first diet of Spires, 1526, when the Romanists needed him so much? He found himself engaged in a continued warfare with Francis I, the King of France, who had been his competitor for the imperial crown of Germany, in 1520. In the battle of Pavia (1525) he defeated his opponent who even became his prisoner. After having held him for a year Charles released him upon his solemn oath to desist from all further antagonism, and he concluded with him the peace of Madrid (1526). But Pope Clement VII constantly anxious to strengthen his worldly power was jealous of the emperor's influence in Italy and relieved Francis of his oath. The pope, King Charles I and all the princes of Italy joined in a new war against Charles (1527). Henry VIII of England also was in agreement. Thus, all Western Europe had combined to break the influence of the Burgundian-Spanish dynasty. Accordingly, with the aid of the pope this diet resulted in the declaration which helped the Lutheran cause so much, namely, that relative to the Worms Edict the princes on both sides should have discretionary power in their own country. This was a great aid to Protestantism. But soon Charles was favored again by the fortunes of war. His armies of Spaniards under Frundsberg stormed the city of Rome. Pope Clement, besieged in St. Angelo, had to surrender himself a prisoner. The soldiers, hungry for their pay, subjected the eternal city to plunder and spoilation such as Rome had never before experienced and

from which they were stopped only after the pope had furnished 400,000 ducats in cash. The enemies of Charles felt themselves forced to the peace of Cambray (1529).

This was immediately before the second diet at Spires (1529), just mentioned. His political success hardened the emperor so that he gave instructions that "no innovations were to be introduced until at least a council had been convened, mass was everywhere to be tolerated, the jurisdiction and revenues of the bishops were in all cases to be fully restored." To this the Lutherans could not yield. It was impossible now, after the development of the Reformation had proceeded as we have described it, to ignore the whole reorganization of the churches on the basis of the Gospel. Accordingly, they formulated a solemn protest—thus making themselves "Protestants" —and with a special delegation they sent the document of that protest to the emperor in Italy. The Estates who signed it were Elector John of Saxony, Landgrave Philip of Hesse, Markgrave George of Brandenburg, the two Dukes of Lueneburg, Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt and the following upper-German cities: Strassburg, Nuremberg, Ulm, Constance, Lindau, Memmingen, Kempten, Noerdlingen, Heilbrunn, Reutlingen, Isny, St. Gallen, Weissenburg, and Windsheim.

4. CHARLES WAS NOW READY FOR ACTION

The situation for the cause of Protestantism was very critical. In his special peace with the pope, Charles V had promised to use his whole power for suppressing the Lutheran heresy. Francis I, in the above-mentioned

treaty at Cambray, had also promised to aid in this undertaking. At first attempts were to be made to win the Protestant princes by promises. If this should not avail, threats were to be used, and after that force. King Ferdinand was to cooperate with an Austrian army. The pope was to induce other princes to assist. After the political power of Protestantism had been crushed, the inquisition patterned after Spanish practices was to be introduced to complete the work. Such were the plans. In that state of mind the emperor was not inclined to listen to the protest from the Protestant princes at Spires. The three members of the delegation, John Eckinger, Alex. Farentraut and Mich. von Kaden, were treated as prisoners and for quite a time they were prohibited from communicating with the Estates that had sent them.

5. AGAIN THE EMPEROR'S ARM IS CHECKED

With an army of 300,000 the Turks, under Sultan Soliman II, started a new march upon Vienna. They were determined to conquer the empire of Charles V. The Sultan carried an emperor's iron crown with him which was to be placed upon his head after the sword of Mohammed had done its work. In vain did the emperor's brother, King Ferdinand of Austria, try to make peace with him. He burned with the desire to first finish the plans made against Protestantism. But this could not be done. The Turk was determined to do his work now. It was this situation that again changed the attitude of the emperor. He needed the good will and support of the Protestant Estates to battle successfully against the Turks.

6. THE AUGSBURG DIET IS CALLED

The Protestants at Spires had appealed for a general council. The emperor also desired such a council. But it was impossible to persuade the pope to agree to this method for the simple reason that at a general and free council he was in danger of losing control over the church as a whole and to be forced to reforms by which he might lose his power. The next best plan was a general German diet presided over by the emperor himself. Accordingly the Augsburg Diet was called for April 8, 1530. And as a general surprise for the Lutherans the language in the invitation which was issued at Bologna, January 21, 1530, was in most cordial terms. They were recognized as one party of the empire, with which the Romanists would negotiate. Here they would all deliberate in mutual kindness "how the error and schism in the holy faith and the Christian religion might be discussed and settled." The participants in the diet should "allay controversy, abandon dislikes, commit all error to the Savior." The emperor promised "to use all diligence in learning, understanding and weighing the opinion, thought and belief of everyone in love and clemency in order to bring all to one harmonious Christian truth, and to settle all things which are not right on either side."[2] And at the same time they would have to agree on a mobilization plan against the Turk.

[2] K. E. Foerstemann, Urkundenbuch zu der Geschichte des Augsburger Reichstages, I, 2-9.

CHAPTER IV

CREATION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

1. THE LUTHERANS PREPARE FOR AUGSBURG

The impression of the imperial invitation upon the Lutheran Estates was not the same in all quarters. Philip of Hesse was distrustful. The same was the case with all the Upper-Germans (in the South), except the city of Augsburg. But in Torgau, the residence of the Elector of Saxony, where the invitations were received on March 11, there was confidence that the emperor seriously intended to work out a peace between the contending parties. Letters simulating cordiality had been received from King Ferdinand of Austria which added to the conviction that electoral Saxony must be represented at this diet.

Hurried preparations were made for the journey. It was thought wise that the elector should be accompanied by Luther, Melanchthon, Jonas, Agricola and Spalatin. Letters were sent to the Protestant princes that by all means they also should be at Augsburg in person. On April 14, the theologians were instructed to draw up articles on "faith and other church usages." Such might be needed at the diet. On these so-called "Torgau Articles" we shall speak below (see page 36).

After these preparations the journey was begun. One of the carriages was loaded with three chests containing

documents. Among these were some of significance for the construction of the Confession or "Apology" to be presented. On the 15th of April Coburg was reached. Here, in the Southernmost town of the elector's domain, the company decided to wait for a time, since a messenger from the emperor had brought the information that the elector did not need to be in Augsburg before May 1st.

The time spent in waiting gave a welcomed opportunity for a further preparation of the articles to be presented to the diet. On the way to Coburg the elector had received a letter from an influential party urging the preparation of an account for the emperor. This should be done on the basis of definite articles of faith.[1] Here it appears for the first time that Melanchthon in particular had received instructions to undertake this work.

NOTE: The Augsburg Confession was not prepared as the charter or constitution of a new ecclessiastical organization. No thought was farther from the minds of the authors of the Augsburg Confession, no scheme was more distasteful than that of founding a new church. The Confession speaks, indeed, of "our churches," but nowhere of "our church." That for which they were striving was that the old church might appreciate what was properly its heritage, and repudiate the innovations of later days, which had been introduced in a period of spiritual torpor, and were working most serious damage. Nor was there offered here any program of reform. There was only an answer as to the question, which the emperor might in all propriety ask, as to what had already occurred and the spiritual grounds for the course that had been taken. The purpose of Melanchthon was to draw up an instrument so moderate, so conservative, so conciliatory, so appreciative of what was historical as to appeal to those who opposed them, and to render any separation unnecessary. It is a diplomatic document emphasizing agreements rather than disagreements. The time had not yet come for the trenchant language and drastic measures followed a few

[1] G. Plitt, Einleitung in die Augustana, 2 vols, 1868, I 522.

years later by Luther in the Smalcald Articles. As conditions changed, the same faith that was expressed at Augsburg necessarily needed a new expression, to meet new emergencies." . . . But "in the providence of God, it was raised far above the position for which it was delivered." (Dr. H. E. Jacobs, President of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa., in an address before the Federation of Lutheran Laymen of York County, Pa., June 25, 1916).

2. MELANCHTHON'S FITNESS FOR WRITING THE CONFESSION

The Peculiar Genius of Melanchthon

The fitness of Luther's co-worker for this task at this hour appears in a number of ways.

Melanchthon had a thorough knowledge of the whole doctrinal situation. One needs only to read his Apology to the Augsburg Confession to receive an overwhelming impression of his deep insight into the religious question. During the past twelve years he had been following Luther in the conflicts with all his opponents. We think of his conflict with Rome, with Erasmus, with Zwingli, with the Anabaptists, and with the principles of Pelagianism as expressed in the earliest of the forms of Socinianism.[2]

And not only did he have the needed knowledge, but he also had already shown a remarkable ability in expressing and summarizing the essentials of the Lutheran Reformation. Our reference is to his "Loci" of which we have spoken; see page 10. R. Seeberg describes Melanchthon as follows: "His universal culture which fitted him, by the publication of many text books, to become the instructor of his age in the sphere of general

[2]Our reference here is to the articles concerning the Socinian Campanus. These were also among the documents taken to Augsburg: **"Die Gelehrten zu Wittenberg und Johann Campanus betreffend."**

philology and philosophy; his delicate sense so averse to all extremes and disturbances; and his wonderful talent for formulating fitted him to become the praeceptor Germaniae in the sphere of theology also."[3]

The church Historian Gieseler called Melanchthon the "female principle of the Reformation." The following rhyme has been written about him: "Was der Martin kuehn begonnen, hat der Philip fein gesponnen und in rechten Schick gebracht." (What Martin boldly began, this Philip finely span and gave to it a proper shape).

Luther, with all the depth of his religious genius (of which we have a wonderful reflection in his Catechisms) was not at his best when it came to guarded theological definition. We see it in the Smalcald Articles. Such language was not fitted for the Augsburg Diet. Luther himself said of his co-worker: "I was born for the purpose of warring with factious spirits (Rotten) and devils. For this reason my books are stormy and warlike. To me it has fallen to up-root trees, to clear away thorn and brush, and to fill up mud-holes. I am a rough pioneer who has to blaze the trail and even up the path. But Magister Philip proceeds quietly and with a clean hand, building, planting, sowing and watering with pleasure according to the rich gifts with which God has endowed him."[4]

Beginning with the above-mentioned "Articles of Instruction for Visitation" (p. 19) and to the end of his life, Melanchthon was asked to formulate the results of the many conferences and colloquies into tangible state-

[3]R. Seeberg, **History of Doctrine**, Engl. Ed., 1905, II, 348.
[4]Erl. Ed., Latin Works, 7, 493.

ments. To this remarkable gift, however, there adhered a certain danger. His desires for covering just the essentials tempted him to union and mediation when a bold decision between two alternatives was the need of the hour. Again, his didactical gift for method, form and system and his desire to coin the ideas of Luther for the use of the school contributed unconsciously to the cultivation of a certain scholasticism, especially in the later part of Melanchthon's life, the full fruit of which was reaped in the "rationalizing," that is intellectualizing tendencies of the seventeenth century. In these endeavors much of the evangelical depth of Luther's religious conceptions was unconsciously sacrificed. But the ideas of Luther were too rich to be covered in their entirety by the formula of Melanchthon's theology. Calvin had the good fortune to see all of his ideas coined in the various Confessions of the churches that followed him. But Luther left to the church that was named after him much uncoined gold. In the endeavor to find and lift this gold, generation after generation, not without frequent misunderstanding, has endeavored to see what a previous age seemed to have overlooked.[5]

At the same time there had to be formulations of the outstanding and fundamental principles of the Lutheran Reformation. This we have in the Augsburg Confession. However, there was no intention to create a final Confession for Lutheranism but rather a "Gelegenheitschrift." The preparation of a report to be given at

[5]For a study of this interesting observation we refer to the second and third German editions of **R. Seeberg, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte,** vol. IV, 1919, pp. 423ff.; cf. **Karl Holl, Luther, Gesammelte Aufsaetze zur Kirchengeschichte,** 1923; also to **H. Leube, Calvinismus und Luthertum im Zeitalter der Orthodoxie,** 1928ff.

this diet constituted the historical "occasion" for the creation of this Confession. In this Melanchthon was not only the guiding factor but he was the author. The old view that Luther, from Coburg, had a large share in the formulation of its articles has been abandoned by modern scholars, such as Theo. Kolde. Yet, while Melanchthon was the author and writer of the Confession he desired to write in most careful harmony with Luther. He consulted Spalatin and Jonas and other fellow-believers at Augsburg. In a work of such importance, he was surely humble enough to consider himself not more than just the organ of the Lutheran party. Let us also remember that the peculiar Melanchthonian scholasticism, of which we spoke before, appeared largely at a later time, namely in the work of Melanchthon to organize the German universities and to relate properly the study of theology to the other sciences.[6]

3. WHY WAS LUTHER LEFT AT COBURG?

On April 23rd the elector and his party left Coburg journeying to Augsburg where they arrived May 2nd. The elector desired to take Luther with him to Nuremberg, but the Nurembergers did not want to expose themselves to the danger of receiving Luther who was under the ban of the empire and under the excommunication of the pope. To take Luther to Augsburg was out of the question. His presence would have been an insult to the emperor. At four o'clock on the morning of the journey, Luther, with Veit Dietrich as his com-

[6]Read **Schmauk-Benze, The Confessional Principle and the Confessions in the Lutheran Church** (1911), p. 618; cf. **J. Haussleiter, Aus der Schule Melanchthons,** a book which describes the theological disputations and promotions at Wittenberg between 1546-60.

panion, was taken to the fortified castle at Coburg where the two stayed until the close of the diet. We shall learn later how Luther through letters from this place comforted and strengthened his friends at Augsburg in moments of trial and perplexity. (P. 70).

A search has been made for other reasons why Luther was left at Coburg and not taken to Augsburg. As a reaction to the strict confessional position of the seventeenth century, there developed a school of "Melanchthonians" who labored to discredit Luther and to make it appear that the mild and mediating Melanchthon was the real hero of the Reformation and that the elector and others did not want Luther at Augsburg. Luther, they said, was undesirable at that diet, not only because the emperor and the Romanists could not be expected to tolerate him, but even the Lutheran party was opposed to him because his theology was not acceptable.[7] The trail for this school was blazed by Jakob Planck in the volumes of his "Geschichte der Entstehung unseres protestantischen Lehrbegriffs," (1778-1800). The thoroughgoing investigations of Theodor Kolde at the Erlangen University have discredited all these endeavors.[8] When one good reason is enough why should there be so much interest in looking for one that can hardly claim to be more than a supposition?[9]

[7]See **L. J. Rueckert, Luther und die Augsburgische Confession,** 1854. H. Heppe wrote much along that line. Compare with these writings **R. Calinich, Luther und die Augsburgische Confession,** 1862, and **J. K. F. Knaake, Luthers Anteil an der Augsburgischen Confession,** 1863.

[8]**Kolde's Historical Introduction** to J. T. Mueller's **Symbolische Buecher,** beginning with the 10th edition of this work, 1907; cf. his article **Augsburger Bekenntnis** in Haucks Protestantische Realencyklopaedie 2, 242ff.

[9]Our reference is to **J. W. Richard, Confessional History of the Lutheran Church,** 1909, p. 38, and the literature there cited.

4. EARLIEST WORK ON THE CONFESSION

a. The "Torgau Articles"

We learned above (Chapter III, 1) that the Wittenberg theologians had been instructed by the elector to prepare articles for the diet and to bring these with them to Torgau where the elector resided. This must have been done. But we do not know with absolute certainty what we are to understand by these supposed "Torgau Articles." They could not have been articles of doctrine for the simple reason that the Lutherans at that time did not want to appear as people of a new faith. They wanted to insist that theirs was the true old apostolic and Catholic faith from which their opponents had departed. Those articles, therefore, must have been statements on the removal of abuses such as are dealt with in part two of the Augsburg Confession (Articles 22-28).[10] But as we saw on page 29, they soon became convinced that they could not appear at Augsburg without being prepared also with articles of faith. Thus the first part of our Confession, containing the "chief articles of faith" came into existence.[11] But before we can speak of the two parts of the Confession and their sources we need to learn something of Melanchthon's first introduction.

b. The First "Preface" to the Confession

At Coburg Melanchthon was busy writing his so-called "Preface" (exordium), a rhetorical address of apology to the emperor. Until 1905 we knew of this document

[10]As to their probable identity we refer to the first six essays in the Weimar archives which K. E. Foerstemann has reprinted in his **Urkundenbuch,** etc., I, pp. 68-84, translated into English by **H. E. Jacobs, Book of Concord** II, 75-86. On their history compare Koestlin-Kawerau, **Martin Luther** II, 192; J. W. Richard, **Conf. History,** p. 30ff.

[11]As to the number of these articles and their difference from the present form of the Confession, see page 48.

only through references.[12] In that year K. Schornbaum discovered, in the Nuremberg archives, the text of this document which Kolde in his trained judgment soon identified as a German translation of the long sought "Preface."[13]

What was this "Preface" on which Melanchthon continued to work so diligently even after he had arrived at Augsburg?[14] It was a real "Apology" to the emperor in which he took pains to defend the development of all the reformatory events in Saxony, beginning with Luther's first protest against indulgences and leading up to the present situation. Everything in the Reformation that might appeal to the emperor was underscored; Luther's opposition to the Anabaptists, his attitude toward the revolution of the peasants and his loyalty to the worldly power. The loyalty of the Saxon electors, Frederick and John, was pointed out. There was even an indirect reference to the others who had shown that loyalty.[15] Melanchthon points out that regarding the mass (Lord's Supper) the churches in his country had maintained confession and the power of the Keys. They also preserved the useful ceremonies and the old festival days.

What shall we say of this "Preface"? The whole political situation must, of course, be considered. But

[12]Foerstemann, I, 68; Vogt, **Die Korrespondenz des Nueremberger Rats.** See the Mitteilungen d. Ver. f. d. Geschichte Nuerembergs, IV, 1882, p. 13.

[13]See Kolde, **Die aelteste Redaktion der Augsburger Konfession mit Melanchthons Einleitung, 1906.** Compare the English translation of that document and its estimate in Schmauk-Benze, **"The Confessional Principle,** etc. See also Richard, pp. 50-53.

[14]He wrote to Luther, May 4, that he had made the preface to the "Apology" somewhat more rhetorical, **Corp. Ref.** II, 39.

[15]See Kolde, **Aelteste Redaktion,** p. 6; English in Schmauk-Benze, as quoted, p. 230. The reference is to the "Pack incident" in which Philip of Hesse had acted against the interests of the emperor. Cf. **Kurtz, Church History,** English ed., 132f.

we see in it an example of the diplomatic traits on Melanchthon. Here he fails to recognize the fact so well exemplified by the Confession itself that at the foundation of the Reformation there were differences from Rome in doctrines springing from the evangelical conception of justification out of grace through faith. When Luther saw this "Exordium" in the first draft of the Confession, which was sent him May 11, and when he accompanied his approval with the remark that it moved so "gently,"[16] he must have thought especially of this preface. It was fortunate that in the further development it was finally set aside (cf. p. 59).

5. THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

a. Dr. Eck's Pamphlet

We have already learned that a letter received on the way to Coburg suggested to the elector that articles of doctrine must be incorporated into the "Apology," as Melanchthon always called the Confession. But other things also helped to strengthen the Lutherans in this conviction that they must be ready to present articles of faith.

The Romanists surely knew that the Lutheran teaching was out of harmony with their own. Therefore, as soon as it became known that the emperor wanted to call a diet, the dukes of Bavaria, on February 10, instructed the theological faculty at the University of Ingolstadt to put together into one writing all that Luther and other opponents to the Roman Catholic faith had taught during the last twelve years. This writing was to show where the Lutherans differed from the Catholic faith, and to indicate how their teaching might be refuted.

[16] De Wette, Luthers Briefe 4, 17.

This was not an easy task. It was not so difficult just to make accusations. This Dr. Eck, one of the faculty, undertook to do. In a pamphlet of articles he put together the expressions of those "that are disturbing the peace of the church." He described as incorrigible heretics Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Karlstadt and the Anabaptists (Hubmeier and Denk). All were put on one level. A hand-written copy of this document was sent to Charles as he approached Germany. This copy was provided with marginal notes in red ink. These were of an inciting nature, calculated to arouse the emperor's suspicion. Terms such as the following were used: "Seditiosa," "In regem Franciae," "In ecclesiastos," "Contra jura." In other cases Eck wrote on the margin the name of the heretic whose teaching, he insisted, was renewed by certain teachings of the reformers, names such as Eutyches, Apollinaris, Arius, Macedonius, Albigenses, and Wickliffe. (This explains the many rejectory statements in the first part of the Augsburg Confession). And then he accompanied this hand-written copy with an inciting letter to the emperor.[17]

It was this writing by Dr. Eck that convinced the elector and his counsellors that after the above-discussed "Introduction" there must be brief articles of faith prepared and with these a somewhat longer discussion of the abuses.

b. The Thought Materials of the Doctrinal Articles (Sources)

What contributed to maturing all these great fundamental ideas that Melanchthon expressed in the first doctrinal part of the Augsburg Confession? There were

[17]See Plitt, I, 527-530.

Luther's conflicts with Rome, Erasmus and Zwingli, and with the Anabaptists. In all these conflicts Melanchthon thought and labored with Luther. It is during conflict that ideas are born and develop into strong convictions and issue into that maturity and clarity which makes them subjects for definition and didactical statement.

Do we also know of FORMULATED thought-materials that Melanchthon used in the construction of the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession? This, especially, is the question that interests us. We must mention two documents: the Schwabach and the Marburg Articles.

We used to speak of these two documents in reversed order because it was believed that the Schwabach Articles were written after the Marburg Colloquy. It seems definite now that they were written first. The traditional view was that Luther, after having written the milder Marburg Articles, felt that he had been too conciliatory and prepared other articles for the immediately following meeting of the North Germans with the South Germans at Schwabach, which were intended to express more strongly the actually existing differences.[18] But against this old view a modern scholar, H. von Schubert, undertook to prove that the so-called Schwabach Articles were written already in July or August of that same year. They were to be used at a coming conference as a basis for ascertaining agreement or disagreement between the Protestants in the North and in the South of Germany. Melanchthon had been the author, with Luther cooperating.[19]

[18]Cf. Kurtz, **Kirchengeschichte** 14th ed. §134-135; **Moeller-Kawerau, Church History** III (1907), p. 103; Koestlin-Kawerau, II, 179; Hauck, **Prot. Realencyklopaedie** (PRE), 18, 2.

[19]Our critic refers to correspondence of Luther: See his **Works,** Erl. Ed. 54, 79ff; **Enders, Briefe 7,** 110; Jonas in **Kawerau, Briefweschsel I,** 238.

The Schwabach Articles

These were drafted as an expression of the faith of the Elector of Saxony and of the Margrave of Brandenburg. The intention was to use them at a future conference with the South German cities which relative to the Lord's Supper were leaning toward Zwingli and to see whether there might not be the possibility of a confessional union on the basis of which a political union could be brought about. We must remember that this was the exciting time of the diet of Spires (see above p. 25). It was feared that under the constant urging of Romanists, the emperor might want to subdue the Protestants with war. It was desirable, therefore, that Protestantism be able to present a united front politically. The South German cities were already for such negotiations because in case of an attack they would be the first to suffer. At the meeting, however, on October 16th, at Schwabach, the South Germans found they could not accept the article on the Lord's Supper. The North Germans declared that their conscience would not permit them to make concessions. Thus nothing came of this first attempt to create a common Confession for German Protestantism. Nevertheless, these "Schwabach Articles" had their value. They served Melanchthon as an important aid in the construction of the first part of the Augsburg Confession.[20]

The Schwabach Articles did not become public until May when Luther, at Coburg, published them with a

The investigation of Dr. von Schubert was published in No. 96 of the Schriften des Verein's fuer Reformationsgeschichte (1908), pp. 1-29; in larger discussion in the **Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte** (August 1908) and in still larger discussion in his book **Bekenntnisbildung und Religionspolitik,** 1910. The findings of von Schubert have not remained uncontradicted, which, of course, does not disprove them.

[20]Cf. **Corp. Ref. II,** 45; **Salig. Historie der Augsburgischen Confession, II,** 128.

sharp introduction under the title Admonition of the Clergymen Assembled at the Augsburg Diet. (Vermahnung an die Geistlichen versammelt auf dem Reichstag zu Augsburg).[21]

It has been asked, if the origin of these articles dated from the days before the Marburg Colloquy (October, 1529) why were they not known long before the Augsburg diet? The simple answer is that they were in reality a political document, namely, an instrument for the creation of a political union between the North and the South against the threatening attitude of the emperor and the Romanistic party.

By whom were they written? All we know is what Luther wrote in the introduction to his above-mentioned publication. He remarks that the articles were not his work alone, that he had only helped to write them. (Ich have sie stellen helfen, denn sie sind nicht von mir allein gestellet).[22] J. W. Richard, an ardent Melanchthonian, remarks: "They bear the characteristic qualities of Luther's mind and express his views on all subjects embraced by them."[23]

In these articles we have an actual contribution of Luther's thought material to the Augsburg Confession. The tone is decidedly polemical against Rome, as for instance in Article 15 where the prohibition of marriage and ordinary food and drink to priests, together with the urging of the monastic life and vows of every kind are declared to be nothing but damnable doctrines of the devil. The mass is spoken of as the greatest of all

[21]Erl. Ed. 24, 365ff.; also H. E. Jacobs, **The Book of Concord,** vol. II; Kolde, **Die Augsb. Konfession mit Beilagen,** 1896, p. 123.
[22]Erl. Ed. 24, 322ff.; Koestlin-Kawerau II, 199.
[23]**Confessional History,** p. 62.

"abominations." In Article 10 there is strong emphasis upon the real presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist, in opposition to "the other side." All this would indicate that Luther had a decisive part in the creation of the Schwabach Articles.

Their contents can here be indicated only in the topics of their discussion, which are as follows: 1. The Trinity; 2. The Incarnation of the Son of God; 3. The Work of Christ; 4. Original Sin; 5. Justification by Faith; 6. Faith, the Gift of God; 7. The Preached Word; 8. The Two Sacraments; 9. Baptism; 10. The Eucharist; 11. Private Confession; 12. The Christian Church; 13. Christ's Return to Judgment; 14. The Government; 15. Monastic Vows and Other Prohibitions; 16. The Mass; 17. Ceremonies of the Church. Space will not be taken here to point out the matters in which the Augsburg Confession shows the influence of the Schwabach Articles. Dr. Calinich and Dr. Knaake, in books referred to above, have gone into details on this subject. Dr. Richard has given a valuable summary particularly of the investigations by Dr. Calinich.[24]

It should be mentioned here that for the purpose of counteracting the accusation of Dr. Eck, the Elector of Saxony sent the emperor, before his arrival at Augsburg, a document which we know under the title "The Elector of Saxony's Confession of Faith." This document is based on the Schwabach Articles. These articles, however, were carefully modified in points that would have insulted the emperor and his counsellors.

The Marburg Articles

These also were a help to Melanchthon in writing the Augsburg Confession.[25] They were drawn up by Luther

[24]See Richard, as quoted, 64-68.

[25]See their text in Luther's Works, Erl. Ed. 65, 99. 88ff.; W. Ed. 30, III, 92, 110ff.; also in **Kolde, Die Augsb. Konf. mit Beilagen**; also H. E. Jacobs, **The Book of Concord,** vol. II.

at the close of the Colloquy held in Marburg, October 2-3, 1529. This, then, was another medium of Luther's influence on the Augsburg Confession.

Landgrave Philip of Hesse, anxious to bring about a union between the Lutherans and the Zwinglians, invited the leading theologians on both sides to his castle at Marburg to talk over their doctrinal differences and to see whether they could not reach an agreement. Luther and Zwingli, naturally, were the chief speakers.

The main difficulty was the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Luther insisted upon the "real presence" of Christ in His Body and Blood in and with the bread and wine, while Zwingli refused this idea and could see in the sacramental act nothing but a memorial of the death of Christ for our salvation. On this subject, the fifteenth (the last) of the Marburg Articles records a disagreement that could not be overcome. There were disagreements also in other matters. But here Zwingli, at this time, accommodated himself to the positions of Luther to such an extent that he subscribed to the articles drafted by Luther. Agreement was expressed on the following doctrines: 1. The Trinity; 2. The Person of Christ; 3. The Work of Christ; 4. Original Sin; 5—7. Justification by Faith; 8. The Spoken Word; 9. Baptism; 10. Good Works; 11. Confession; 12. The Magistracy; 13. Human Ordinances; and 14. Infant Baptism. Article 15 followed these, in which disagreement was frankly stated.

We know that Luther felt constrained to refuse Zwingli's hand of fellowship. It had been offered with the thought of a common celebration of the Lord's Supper before parting. To this Luther could not yield with-

out ostentatiously denying the truth regarding the Lord's Supper for which he had been contending under constant objection by Zwingli. The mild Melanchthon agreed entirely with Luther. In his correspondence he could not explain to his own satisfaction why the Zwinglians wanted a common communion in face of the failure to reach an agreement on this disputed subject.[26] It is a mistake to believe that Luther's attitude expressed an unfriendly feeling toward the Zwinglians. In a thorough investigation Hans von Schubert has pointed out the peaceful mood with which Luther came to the end of the Marburg Colloquy. The much quoted remark, "Ye have another spirit than we" was an objective statement and was not spoken in the spirit of an invective. In letters written at that time, for instance to his wife, Luther expressed hope for a growing union to extend also to the difference on the Lord's Supper.[27]

The Persisting Differences

The peaceful attitude of Luther in the closing of the colloquy is seen particularly in his altogether too optimistic codification of so many points of agreement (cf. articles quoted above).[28]

[26]See the PRE, vol. 12, 354; also **Corp. Ref.,** II, 1108.

[27]Von Schubert in **Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte,** 1908, p. 354. Cf. his book **Bekenntnisbildung und Religionspolitik,** 1529-1530. Von Schubert had been preceded by B. Bess who in his writing on **"Luther in Marburg"** (Preussische Jahrbuecher, 1901, vol. 104, pp. 418ff.) for the first time had given a different picture of our reformer at that colloquy from those that had been painted by the historians under the influence of Rationalism and the Union. See W. Gussmann's article "Luther in Marburg" in **Allg. Ev. Luth. Kirchenzeitung** (Leipzig, 1929) No. 33 and 34. Also W. Elert, "Luther in Marburg," in **Zeitwende,** 1929, pp. 315ff. Cf. Luther's correspondence in De Wette, **Briefe,** vols. 3 and 4; in Enders, **Luthers Briefwechsel,** vol. 7.

[28]Zwingli, in letters after he had returned to his home, wrote in very sharp and sarcastic language about Luther. See **W. Walther, Reformierte Taktik im Sakramentsstreit, in Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift,** 1896, pp. 794ff., 917ff.

We may describe the persisting doctrinal differences between Luther and Zwingli as follows:

There was (1) the relation of the two natures in the Person of Christ. Here Zwingli inclined to the Nestorianizing, side-by-side relation between the divine and the human in the historic Christ, after the fashion of the old Antiochian School (Theodore of Mopsuestia). Luther, on the other hand, stood for the organic, personal union, following the Alexandrian School (Cyril). There was (2) the difference on the Word. Zwingli emphasized the "inner" Word with a concession to tenets of the Anabaptists, which made Luther stress the written and spoken Word. There was (3) an actual difference on man's natural depravity. Zwingli would admit only a weakness in man which does not become real sin until it results in sinful acts. Luther insisted that this natural, sinful condition is the real, special sin of mankind. This difference affected (4) the conception of infant baptism. To Zwingli baptism was a badge of recognition as a Christian, a kind of initiation into the church. To Luther it was a sacrament of regeneration, of forgiveness of sin and of an imputation of Christ's righteousness. With large agreement (5) on justification by faith and good works there was on the part of Zwingli a humanistic approach to the inner problems of religion which made for fundamental differences from Luther's doctrine of sin and grace.

An Unconscious Difference

W. Koehler, a Swiss theologian, in a book entitled "Ulrich Zwingli und die Reformation in der Schweiz," (1923) has written interestingly on this subject. He

praises W. Dilthy and E. Troeltsch Zwingli as being, among all the Reformers, the pioneer of modernistic ideas. This, of course, was unconscious on the part of Zwingli who believed in the fundamentals of conservative Protestantism, including the divinity of Christ and his atonement as a vicarious sacrifice. But his unconscious contact with later Modernism lay in his humanistic co-ordination of the Bible with the sources of classical antiquity in his stress upon reasonableness as a criterion of truth and in his insistence that the pagans also had real saving religion. To Luther, Calvin and the other reformers there was a fundamental dividing line between Christianity and paganism, a chasm that cannot be bridged; Zwingli bridged this chasm in humanistic fashion with a wider conception of religion. In this he made himself a pioneer of Modernism.

All the points which we enumerated above, coupled with the Zwinglian conception of the Church and State as a theocracy, to which Luther was fundamentally opposed, show that back of the 14 Marburg articles of agreement there was a large sphere of disagreement. On this both Luther and Zwingli did not and could not have the knowledge that we have today. However, they must have felt the difference. Luther expressed it objectively in the words: "Ye have another spirit than we."

We close this discussion of the Schwabach and the Marburg Articles with the statement that as a source for the Confession the Schwabach Articles were of chief importance. The Marburg Articles had less significance in the creation of the Augsburg Confession.

6. THE DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLETION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

We have learned that our confessors decided to insert articles of faith which were to be placed between that introduction (Exordium) and the articles on abuses. The decision was reached when they read the slanders by Dr. Eck. Melanchthon writes: "Abominable lies were heaped on our churches. . . . Now an answer had to be made to the emperor.[29] But we would be much mistaken if we should think that these "articles of faith" and the "articles on abuses" were completed soon after the arrival of the emperor in Augsburg on May 22nd. Melanchthon wrote to Luther: "In the Apology we change many things daily."[30]

Historical Drafts, Texts and Copies

(1) On May 11th the first draft was completed and sent to Luther. (See below). This draft which is not known to exist today cannot have had more than 17 articles of the 28 which are now found in both parts of the Augsburg Confession.

(2) We know this for even a later draft, namely the above-mentioned "Oldest known Redaction" of May 31st, which was discovered in connection with the first "Introduction" of Melanchthon and published by Kolde, did not have more than 17 articles. This draft was a German translation of the Latin text of the Confession prepared by the representatives of Nuremberg at the diet. They took it home to show it to the counsel of that city for a purpose to be spoken of later (p. 60).[31]

[29]Preface to the German **Corpus Doctrinae,** 1560ff.
[30]**Corp. Ref.** II, 60.
[31]It was found in the Nuremberg Archives by K. Schornbaum and identified by Kolde who published the findings in his already quoted

It is interesting to observe how incomplete the Confession still was on May 31st:

a. The articles were still prefaced by that peculiar "Introduction" of Melanchthon.

b. The order of articles was different from the Confession in its final form. Article 4 on Justification occupied the fifth place and Articles 7 and 8 on the Church were one article. Article 8 was on Baptism and 9 was on the Lord's Supper, etc.

c. Articles 20 and 21 were not yet written. Article 27 had been rewritten since May 11th,[32] but Melanchthon continued to amend this article.[33] Article 28, at that time, was constantly changed.[34]

d. Certain differences affecting the doctrinal substance of some of the articles are of special interest. Article 2 did not yet express the rejection of the "Pelagians and others." Article 5 did not yet have the words that the Holy Ghost works faith "where and when it pleaseth God." Article 4 said nothing of an imputed righteousness. In Article 7 there was not the twice-repeated "rightly" in the sentence "in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered." Our Article 9 gave no doctrine of Baptism but merely insisted on infant Baptism against the Anabaptists. In Article 17, on Christ's return to judgment, this redaction had a sentence that was changed before the delivery of the Confession. It was the remark "that all deceased men

Aelteste uns bekannte Redaktion, etc. See the English translation in Schmauk-Benze, pp. 179ff. To the historians this text is known by the mark Nue.

[32]**Corp. Ref.** II, 60.

[33]Cf. Kolde, **Aelteste Redaktion,** p. 61.

[34]Kolde, pp. 26-31, pp. 63-67. **P. Tschackert, Ungeaenderte Augsburgische Konfession,** 1901, pp. 191-225.

shall be raised up with the same body in which they died."

(3) Very recently (1925) another discovery was made, again, in the Nuremberg Archives. W. Gussmann discovered a German text of the Confession dated June 15, ten days before its delivery.[35] The special significance of this discovery is shown in the following observations: Melanchthon's Introduction had been set aside. The "document" was no longer the "Apology" of the Elector of Saxony, but had become the common Confession of all the Lutheran parties. Our present Introduction by Dr. Brueck, however, had not yet been written, neither had the Epilogue. The document as a whole reflects the situation as it was at the time of the emperor's arrival when the need of cooperation was seen. It is a copy of the German text sent by the Nuremberg legates to the council of their city, as they had sent the German translation of the Latin text on May 31st. Of special interest in this find is the fact that the doctrinal part of this text shows very little variation from the Confession as we now have it. Kolde (Aelteste Redaktion, p. 44), wrote of the importance of this missing text of which we have knowledge through a letter of the Nuremberg legates, printed in the Corp. Ref. II, 105. The specialists on the history of the Augsburg Confession will call this text Nue (Nuremberg) to distinguish it from a Nue 2, next to be mentioned.

(4) A German text of a still later date and representing practically the final form of the Confession is

[35]See his article in **Theologisches Literaturblatt,** Leipzig, 1925, No. 19, and reprinted in America in **Kirchliche Zeitschrift,** Wartburg Publishing House, November, 1925.

the one that P. Tschackert reports on pp. 31 and 48 f of his book "Die unveraenderte Augsburgische Konfession, deutsch und lateinisch, nach den besten Handschriften aus dem Besitze der Unterzeichner" (1901). This text which should be marked Nue 2 (Nuremberg 2) dates from June 22nd, three days before the delivery.[36] At the time the Confession was completed many copies were made.[37] Among these was the one sent Luther.[38] Still, even in the last few days before the delivery, Melanchthon, as well as the copyists, were constantly improving the texts. Melanchthon, espeically, was busy modifying sharp expressions, because the emperor's secretary, Valdes, to whom he had shown the Confession, had told him that in places it was far too strong.[39] This explains the many variations in both the German and the Latin texts, of which we have a convenient exhibition in the work of Tschackert.[40]

7. HOW MUCH OF THIS CONFESSION DID LUTHER SEE?

a. Interest In This Question

Here we have had an unnecessary agitation between pro and anti-Melanchthonian groups of historians. The Melanchthonians of the nineteenth century, in reaction against the old Anti-Melanchthon statement dating from the time of a developing estrangement between Luther and his co-laborer[41] intensified by the crypto-Calvinistic and Philippistic controversies in the days of Matthias

[36]**Corp. Ref.** II, 129, 143.
[37]Tschackert, p. 49.
[38]**Corp. Ref.** II, 146.
[39]**Corp. Ref.** II, 740.
[40]On the Latin texts and copies see Tschackert, pp. 37-46.
[41]See Koestlin-Kawerau, II, pp. 567ff.

Flaccius[42] and carried through the seventeenth century, was interested in eliminating the influence of Luther upon the formation of the Augsburg Confession. They overlooked the fact that the Schwabach Articles alone constituted a large influence of Luther upon the Confession. In reaction against these Melanchthonians, again, there were strong Lutheran theologians who were anxious to stress the contribution of Luther to this magna charta of Lutheranism. In this desire they have frequently been too insistent upon claiming that from Coburg Luther had a continued and decisive influence upon shaping the articles of the Confession. There is no historical proof of this.

Such continuous contact of Luther with the theologians at Augsburg was not necessary. Melanchthon knew all the essential theological convictions of Luther. He had no desire to speak in his own name or to state a faith of his own in a document that was to express the position of the whole Lutheran party. We know of course that since Luther's conflict with Erasmus, Melanchthon had begun to develop views of his own on the doctrine of free will, which later in his Loci of 1535 began to stand out as a difference between him and Luther and which later, after the death of Luther (in the synergistic controversies), became a point of conflict. But at the time of the Augsburg Diet there was no consciousness of a really existing difference. And regarding the real presence in the Lord's Supper, Melanchthon, at this time, was as unyielding as Luther himself.[43]

[42]Cf. **J. L. Neve, Introduction to the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church,** 2nd ed., 1927, pp. 101-107; 404ff.
[43]**Corp. Ref.** II, 83, 103: Dogmata habent intolerabilia.

b. Luther Saw Only the "First Draft"

All that Luther saw of the Confession before its delivery was the first draft of May 11th, of which we have spoken above (p. 48). The elector sent a special messenger on horseback to Luther at Coburg. He was asked to examine the document and feel free to write suggestions on the margin (daneben).[44] On May 15th Luther returned the document with the following words: "I have read over Magister Philip's Apology. It pleases me pretty well (fast wohl), and I know of nothing therein to be improved or changed; nor would it become me, for I cannot move so gently. Christ, our Lord, grant that it may bring much and great fruit as we hope and pray."[45]

This first draft of May 11th is lost. We cannot say with absolute certainty what was in it. But considering the gradual development and completion of the Confession through the stages which we have described, it is reasonable to believe that the draft of May 11th could not have contained the articles and matters which were not yet in the form of the Confession as it stood in the redaction of May 31st. We have described it above (p. 48) and found that it was still very incomplete. This is all that Luther saw. The next text sent him was a copy of the completed texts ready for delivery.

c. No Intention to Ignore Luther

It is true that for a long time (up to June 13th), after a letter from Melanchthon on May 22nd[46] there was no correspondence of the Augsburgers with Luther. (See

[44]Idem, II, 47.
[45]De Wette, 4, 17.
[46]**Corp. Ref.** II, 60.

p. 70). But that silence is easily explained. Great problems were pressing upon the Lutheran representatives daily. We mention chiefly the union movements among themselves and the need of adapting the Confession to the situation created by the arrival of the emperor. There was no intention to ignore Luther. It is Melanchthonian "Tendenzgeschichte," when, for instance, advantage is taken of the elector's innocent remark that if Luther wanted to add anything to the text of the Confession he should feel free to write on the margin (daneben), as if it were the intention to remind him that they did not want his wisdom in the text. In the serious situation of those trying days at Augsburg there were no "Melanchthonians" and no "Gnesio-Lutherans" or Flaccians. The fiery trials of threatening attack were welding all Lutherans into one harmonious group.

CHAPTER V

THE DELIVERY OF THE CONFESSION

The Confession was finished and ready for delivery. It was composed of twenty-eight articles in Latin and German. Twenty-one dealt with matters of doctrine. Seven treated "abuses." The whole was prefaced by a new introduction written by Dr. Brueck, the first chancellor of the Elector of Saxony who spoke in the name of all the Lutheran parties. The Zwinglians were not included. Zwingli, who was not present, had sent a Confession of his own (Fidei Ratio). Four of the South German cities, namely, Constance, Strassbourg, Memmingen and Lindau, felt they could not consistently accept Article 10 on the Lord's Supper. Until the last, Philip of Hesse tried to have this article changed so that the followers of Zwingli might be included and could also sign, but his efforts were in vain. The cities under the influence of Martin Bucer thus handed in their own Confession, the so-called Confession of the Four Cities (Confessio Tetrapolitana). Later (Ch. X) we shall have occasion to characterize the Augsburg Confession. From the following the impression will be received that the public delivery and reading of the Confession was an act of faith. We shall relate.

1. THE ARRIVAL OF THE EMPEROR

It was on the 15th of June, nine years after his appearance at the diet of Worms, that Charles entered

the city of Augsburg to preside over the memorable diet now to be convened in that historical city.

Charles V, the celebrated victor over many enemies, had just been crowned Roman Emperor by the pope. He could not be expected to be in sympathy with the cause of Protestantism. For months he had been under the influence of the enemies of the Reformation. He came to Augsburg as the anxiously awaited protector of the Roman Faith. The papal representatives for the diet had joined him soon after he started. Some of the Romanistic princes had left early to meet him at Innsbruck. The others also prepared to meet him before he reached the city.

His entrance took place under very spectacular circumstances. The Elector of Saxony carried the sword of the empire before him. On both sides, on horseback, could be seen in gorgeous attire the papal ambassadors, Campeggius and Pimpinelli. Next to the emperor in the parade followed the bigoted enemies of the Reformation. These were his brother, King Ferdinand of Austria, Elector Joachim I of Brandenburg and the Dukes of Saxony and Bavaria.

On the first day occasion was offered the Lutherans to give testimony of their faith. After the ceremonies of welcome were over, the papal ambassador lifted his hands to communicate the benediction of the pope. But while all others fell on their knees the Lutheran princes remained standing. This took courage, but the cause of the Gospel was to these laymen a matter of conscience. They regarded it their sacred duty to confess the truth under all circumstances. On the following day the Corpus Christi Procession was to take place and the

Lutherans were expected to participate. But they refused.[1]

Three days of dispute followed over the emperor's demand that during the diet the Protestants must not let their ministers preach. All replied that they could not obey. Particularly memorable is the manner in which the Markgrave George of Brandenburg, in a private meeting with the emperor, declared that for conscience's sake he could not forbid his ministers to preach the Gospel; rather would he have his head cut off. The emperor answered in a German dialect: "Nit Kop ab, loever prince."[2] The point maintained on the Protestant side was chiefly that they could not yield to the emperor's demand because the opposite party was free to preach. Finally the emperor modified his order in such a way that, for a time at least, both sides were to desist from preaching, and the public services were to be limited to the liturgical elements.[3]

2. THE OPENING OF THE DIET

On the 20th of June, Monday, the emperor accompanied by the princes, moved to the cathedral in very spectacular procession. Here the diet was opened with impressive services. These included a celebration of the mass by the Archbishop of Mayence. Then followed an address in Latin to the emperor by the papal legate Pimpinelli. He was admonished to do away with the schism in the Church. After the service all marched in

[1]Foerstemann, I, 283ff. **Schirrmacher, Akten, des Augsburger Reichstages,** 1876, p. 64. **Corp. Ref.** II, 110.

[2]**Kolde, Analecta Augustana,** p. 135.

[3]See Schirrmacher, 58, 484. Foerstemann I, 268; **Corp. Ref. II,** 107, 113, 117f. **Guericke, Kirchengeschichte III,** 179.

procession to the hall where the convention was to be held.

The first problem was the program for the diet. The plan of the Romanists evidently was first to arrive at an agreement as to the defense of the empire against the Turk, and then, after the Lutheran estates had obligated themselves, to take up the religious question. But the Lutherans insisted that the religious question should be first on the program, and they prevailed.[4]

3. THE SITUATION DRAMATICALLY PRESENTED

During the days of the Augsburg Diet a comedy was presented on the stage by players who disappeared immediately afterward. It was a play that was highly characteristic of the situation. A scholar (Reuchlin) appeared with a bunch of straight and crooked sticks, threw them down and left. A theologian (Erasmus) came and, trying in vain to make the crooked sticks straight, he left the stage. A third man in the garb of a monk (Luther) appeared and after he had set fire to the sticks went out. Another in the robe of the emperor (Charles) came and drew his sword with which he fanned the flames and, seeing what he was doing, went off with indignation. Then the head of the Church appeared, and studying for a moment what should be done to extinguish the fire, he saw two vessels, one containing oil and the other water. He took the one with the oil, poured it on the fire and ran off in consternation.[5]

[4] **Coelestin, Historia I,** 123.
[5] See **H. Holstein, Die Reformation im Spiegelbilde der dramatischen Literatur,** 1886, p. 196; Guericke, III, 179-180, footnote 2.

4. THE CONFESSION IS FINISHED FOR DELIVERY

Tuesday, June 21st, the day after the opening of the diet a number of very important steps were taken by the Lutheran princes and theologians with regard to the Confession to be presented. The situation accompanying the emperor's arrival and the opening of the diet had shown them that they were in common danger.

a. A Common Confession

At this time the agreement was reached to deliver a common Confession. The document which Melanchthon had been preparing exclusively in the name of the Elector of Saxony became, by agreement of the several estates, the common Confession of all the Lutherans at Augsburg. We have seen how the conviction of the need of this step had been gradually maturing. At first it was suggested by the Margrave of Brandenburg that Melanchthon's "Introduction" might be modified by inserting references to the loyalty of all the estates.[6] But it was decided that it should be set aside altogether and replaced by our present Introduction which was written by Chancellor Brueck. The final consummation of this course was an event of great significance in the confessional history of the Lutheran Church. It was through this decision that the Saxon Confession became the "Augsburg Confession" and as such the bond of union for the consolidated Lutheran party.

b. The Responsible Parties

It is of interest to know how the parties subscribing to the Confession came into this union. It seems the

[6] **Corp. Ref.** II, 88ff.

first to join was the Margrave of Brandenburg. Then, on the 18th of June, the Nurembergers were assured by these two that they were welcome.[7] And it seems that at the same time we have the admission of Duke Ernest of Lueneburg, Prince Wolf of Anhalt and the city of Reutlingen.[8] There were special difficulties on the part of Philip of Hesse in his ardent desire to present a Confession so broad on the question of the Eucharist that the Zwinglians would not be excluded. For this reason he as well as the above (p. 55) mentioned (Four Cities) did not favor the "truly present" (vere adsint) in Article 10 and especially not the rejectory phrase: "We disapprove of those who teach otherwise," (improbant secus docentes). But here the Lutherans, including Melanchthon, were immovable. They could not commit themselves to the symbolical interpretation of the words of institution of the Lord's Supper. Philip, from the beginning, had taken no steps to prepare a Confession of his own. So he yielded and was ready to subscribe the Saxon Confession. Still the feelings of the landgrave were considered so that in another part of the Confession, Art. 24, the signers refrained from an attack upon the "Sacramentarians."[9]

5. FINAL MEETING AND AFFIXING OF SIGNATURES

The emperor had set Friday, June 24th for the delivery of the Confession. Accordingly, on June 23rd the Elector of Saxony invited all the interested parties in-

[7] **Ibidem II, 112.**
[8] Kolde, **Introduction to Mueller, XVI.**
[9] We see it when we compare this article in Kolde's **"Oldest Redaction"** (Na) with the final form in our present text. Cf. Schmauk-Benze, p. 240.

cluding twelve theologians and several other scholars and doctors to join him at his lodging. Here the articles of the Confession were read and the hearers were told that if anyone thought anything ought to be changed he might express himself with freedom. Like meetings had been held on preceding days. In one of these (June 20th) the elector exhorted his allies in religion in an earnest and solemn address "faithfully and fearlessly to stand by" and to defend the cause of God and the pure religion and not to allow themselves by any threats or intimidations to be led to deny the same since all machinations against God will be impotent and the good cause will at length undoubtedly triumph.[10]

We are already familiar with the parties who were to sign the Confession and we see their names quoted under the texts now used. There is not entire unanimity in the giving of these names. Kolde explains this by the fact that at the public reading more than just the princes who had signed rose to profess their faith.[11] It is to be kept in mind that the original copies are lost. Of this we shall learn later (Ch. V).

6. PUBLIC DELIVERY OF THE CONFESSION

a. Attempts to Prevent a Public Reading

It was not easy to win the emperor's consent to a public hearing of this Confession of Faith. He and all the Romanists knew that such a reading would remove many prejudices and strengthen the Lutheran cause. The papal ambassadors especially, who in cooperation with Dr. Eck and others had been busy in spreading

[10]Here we have combined the reports of Coelestin and **J. J. Mueller, Historie,** 1705; cf. Richard, p. 81-83.

[11]**Introduction to J. T. Mueller,** XIX, note 1.

so many lies about their antagonists, feared that such public reading of what the Lutherans actually believed might explode most of their tales. For that reason the imperial secretary Valdez had told Melanchthon that the emperor might deal with the Protestants regarding their differences from the Church privately ("in einer Enge und Stille").[12] But in the meeting the day before the princes decided they would plead for a public hearing.

On the 24th of June, at a certain time in the afternoon, after alarming reports from Lower Austria as to the devastations by the Turk, the Lutheran princes arose, and Chancellor Dr. Brueck as their spokesman, said they were now ready to read their Confession. The emperor answered that it was now too late in the afternoon and that they should simply hand him the document which he would consider (ueberdenken) with his counsellors and return an answer. Dr. Brueck replied promptly that they could not agree to dispose of this important matter in such a way. They had been so slandered relative to the doctrines they held that for truth's sake there should be a public expression of their doctrinal position. They, therefore, plead for a public reading. The emperor, upon brief consultation with his advisers, insisted upon his demand. But the Lutherans did not give up. Dr. Brueck said: The emperor had never refused to listen in cases of less importance, and now they could not believe that he would refuse in a matter that had so much to do with the welfare of the souls of his subjects. The result of this insistent pleading was a compromise. The emperor ordered that the reading was to take place on the following day in the chapel of his palace before

[12]Ibidem, p. XVI.

the regular members of the diet. The chapel had a capacity of only two hundred. This excluded a larger assembly such as would have been present in the "Rathaus" where the regular sessions of the diet were held. The Lutherans had to yield to this order. But they succeeded in another important matter. The emperor had asked for the document to be handed him now, but they plead that it should be left in their hands because there were matters they wished to revise and correct. This was granted.[13]

NOTE 1: The Confession was thus changed the last moment before its delivery, even after it had been signed. The Nuremberg legates wrote home that "in some parts it is improved, and everywhere it is made as mild as possible." It seems, however, that the changing pertained chiefly to part two of the abuses (Articles 22—28), for they write: "The Confession, in so far as the articles of faith were concerned, is in substance almost in accord with that which we have already sent you." The reference must be to that text of June 15th (p. 50).

NOTE 2: Another matter of interest is that this last day's possession of the two original documents must have given the copyists an opportunity to begin or to finish some of the work which now makes it possible for us, after the loss of the original manuscripts, to reconstruct a reliable German and Latin text. This is a matter to which we shall return (p.).

b. The Public Hearing of the Confession

Historically, it was a great moment when, Saturday afternoon, June 25th, the "Augsburg Confession" was publicly read before Charles V, the princes with their counsellors and the commissioners of the independent cities (Reichsstaedte). Spectacular features were in evidence. Charles V sat on an elevated platform. To

[13]**Corp. Ref.** II, 127-30; Cf. Coelestin I, 1434; Mueller, 588ff.; Richard, 84ff.; **J. H. W. Stuckenberg, The History of the Augsburg Confession,** 1869, pp. 70ff.

his left was his brother, King Ferdinand of Austria. He was joined by the electors of Mayence and Cologne and other dignitaries. To his right sat the Elector of Saxony and the princes. Further back were the commissioners of the cities and the civil counsellors. Dr. Eck also was present. It was a limited assembly but a great multitude stood outside listening at the open windows.

When the supreme moment had come, the Elector of Saxony declared that he and his associates in the Faith were ready to read their Confession. With this Dr. Brueck with the Latin and Dr. Beyer, another chancellor of Saxony, with the German text in hand, stepped into the center of the chapel. They had planned to read the German text. To minimize the effect, however, the emperor demanded that the Latin text be heard. Many who were present would not have been able to understand the Latin. At this moment the Elector of Saxony arose and said that since they were on German soil he hoped His Majesty would permit the German tongue. The emperor yielded. Now Dr. Beyer, a man with a penetrating voice, read loud and slowly word for word the articles of the Confession. He was heard even by the crowds standing outside. When after two hours Dr. Beyer had finished, he returned his copy to Dr. Brueck who was about to deliver both copies to the imperial secretary. It was thought that Charles would pass them to the Elector of Mayence, custodian of the German Imperial Archives. But the emperor took both copies. He gave the German copy to the Elector of Mayence to be deposited in the archives. He put the Latin copy into his own pocket, later placing it in the Imperial

Archives in Bruessels. We want to remember that the Netherlands were crownland to Spain over which Charles was the king. The further history of these two original copies will be related at another place.[14]

c. The Emperor's Temporary Answer

We have a report by the Nuremberg legates, published in the Corpus Reformatorum (II, 142 ff), a section of which may here find a place: "Then the emperor after conferring with the electors and princes, announced through Duke Frederick to the Elector of Saxony and his allies, that His Majesty had heard the Confession. But inasmuch as the matter was somewhat lengthy and also highly important necessity was laid on His Majesty to consider and to counsel well over the whole matter, that he would do this and would demean himself in the matter as becomes a gracious Christian emperor, and when he shall have made up his mind on the subject he will again summon the electors and the princes."

"For this answer and for the gracious hearing the electors, princes and allies returned hearty thanks to the emperor, the king, the electors, princes and estates, with the assurance that they had acted with all loyalty and friendliness; also that if His Majesty should summon them again they would willingly appear, and not only in regard to this matter but in regard to all matters for which the diet had been summoned by His Majesty they would perform their duty."

"The emperor, as has since been reported to us, spoke with the elector and princes privately, and requested

[14]**Corp. Ref.** II, 145, 245. Coelestin I, 189. **Spalatin, Annales,** 139. Cf. Neve, **The Augsburg Confession,** 1914, 46f. Richard, 86f.

them to retain the Confession and not allow it to be printed. This they promised to do.[15]

d. Effect of the Reading of the Confession

What effect did this reading have upon the emperor? He surely was conscious of the tremendous importance of this document. This is seen in the manner in which he disposed of the two texts; also in this that he commanded his secretary to translate the Confession into French and Italian, with not a word omitted in the translation. But did the contents elicit a real personal interest? There are different reports. Brenz writes that when the Confession was read the emperor slept.[16] But when we remember that the reading took two hours, napping for a moment on the part of a layman should not be interpreted as meaning a lack of interest. Court-preacher Coelestin of Brandenburg remarks that the emperor slept for a moment only. But Schaff comments that when a few weeks later the reply of the Romanists was read (The Confutation) Charles again was soundly asleep. Jonas reports that the emperor listened with a good deal of interest. ("Satis attentus erat Caesar").

What effect did the reading have upon others? Duke William of Bavaria said in a friendly remark to the elector: "I have been misinformed concerning this doctrine." To Dr. Eck, his own professor at Ingolstadt, he addressed this question: "Can you refute this doctrine?" Eck answered: "With the Fathers I can, but not with the Scriptures." "Then," was the reply, "I see that the Lutherans are in the Scriptures and we outside."

[15]Quotation from translation by Dr. J. W. Richard.
[16]Cum Confessio legeretur, Caesar abdormivit. **Philip Schaff, Creeds of Christendom,** I, *227.*

A beautiful remark by the father confessor of the emperor is reported. He said to Melanchthon: "You have a theology which can be understood only by one who prays much." The Cardinal Campeggius is reported to have said: "Personally I could admit this doctrine, but officially we must oppose it." Bishop von Stadion said: "What has been read is true, the pure truth, and we cannot deny it."[17]

What was the effect upon the Lutherans themselves? They felt greatly encouraged. They felt they had given an account of themselves as a Church and that they had a right to exist. The Confession now became their flag which they were determined to follow. A number of Cities subscribed to the Confession, at Augsburg (Heilbrunn, Kempten, Windsheim, Weissenburg, Frankfurt on the Main). Several princes who joined later received their deciding impression on this occasion (the Dukes Erich of Brunswick and Barnum of Pommeris, the Counts George Ernest of Henneberg and William of Nassau).[18] Spalatin wrote: "This was a day that witnessed one of the greatest acts that has ever taken place on this globe. A Confession has been delivered in Latin and German, so Scriptural in character, as the world has not heard the like in a thousand years."[19] And Luther who now received a complete copy[20] rejoiced that he had been permitted to see this day when the words of the Psalmist (119:46) had been fufilled; "I

[17]On all these reports see **Corp. Ref.** II, 245; Coelestin II, 189; Spalatin. 138, 140; **Saubert's Miracula Augustanae Confessionis,** pp. 84f., 167; **Corp. Ref.,** 143, 145, 150; De Wette, 4, 70; Enders, 8, 66ff. Regarding the remark of Duke William of Bavariae, cf. **Rottermundi** p. 102; **Binterim, Der Reichstag zu Augsburg;** also Luther's **Warnung an seine lieben Teutschen,** on the final resolution of the Augsburg Diet, 1531, Erl. Ed. 25, 14.

[18]Salig, I, 224. Cyprian, 231ff. Saubert, 201.

[19]**Annales,** p. 138.

[20]**Corp. Ref.** II, 140. Enders 8, 33; 8, 83; De Wette 4, 71.

will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed." These words have been used as a motto over all the editions of the Augsburg Confession.[21]

[21]See F. Bente in **Concordia Triglotta,** 1921, p. 20; Stuckenberg, 73ff.

CHAPTER VI

DEFENDING THE CONFESSION

1. MELANCHTHON'S ATTITUDE FOLLOWING THE DELIVERY OF THE CONFESSION

Melanchthon with all his fine gifts for formulating truth was not a man for a crisis. "In place of dealing with difficulties he always tried to evade" (Plitt). As scholar and teacher dealing with principles objectively and abstractly he was courageous in proclaiming the truth that had become his conviction. But when it came to taking positions in cases of actual conflict he exhausted all devices of diplomacy to secure the tranquility of the Church and of his own mind.

Before the delivery of the Confession we find him negotiating with the emperor's secretaries aiming to convince them that the difficulty consisted chiefly in the removal of a few abuses. It was this information that even led Melanchthon to believe for a time that the Confession need not be delivered. But the princes and the other theologians were of a different mind, as we have seen.[1]

Heavier still were the worries upon Melanchthon's

[1]On this whole episode see Kolde's **Introduction to Mueller,** p. XVIf. Here may be the place to call attention to the writing of **G. Kawerau, "Die Versuche, Melanchthon zur katholischen Kirche zurueckzufuehren",** No. 73 of the Schriften des Vereins fuer Reformationgeschichte, Cf., **J. A. Faulkner, "How Rome Tempted Melanchthon",** see the **Lutheran Church Quarterly,** January, 1929.

mind after the delivery of the Confession. Now his party was under indictment, the Romanist majority with the emperor being the judges. The emperor, although he had so far not been ungracious in his attitude, was surrounded by so many agitators for the Roman cause. After weeks of interrupted correspondence with Luther[2] Melanchthon was again in touch with him. He asked his counsel regarding concessions that seemed to be necessary, especially on the sacrament under both kinds, on celibacy and private masses. The theologians at Augsburg, Dr. Jonas for instance, were worried with the depression of Melanchthon over his inclination to concessions, and he wrote Luther pleading for his support.[3]

2. LUTHER UPHOLDING HIS FRIENDS AT AUGSBURG

Luther's friends neglected to correspond with him from Augsburg. During the first two weeks of June he received no letters. He called them the "Junker Schweigler of Augsburg." But gradually he became so provoked when this silence continued that when finally the first letters arrived he refused to read them.[4] Meanwhile he heard of the great event of June 25th, the impressive delivery of the Confession to the emperor and the princes. This thrilled him in his soul and when he heard of the new worries of his friends, especially of Melanchthon, he forgot his indignation, feeling this was not a time for anger but for prayer, and "the two do not go together." He wrote long letters to all of his

[2]Koestlin-Kawerau, II, 208ff.
[3]Enders 8, 33f. 39, 26, 62f., 66. 27. 67.
[4]Koestlin-Kawerau II, 212.

friends at Augsburg, to Melanchthon, Jonas, Agricola, Spalatin, Brenz and to John Frederick, the son of the elector. He comforted the prince relative to the emperor's order against preaching on Sundays, stating that the public reading of the Confession was worth more than preaching. To Melanchthon he wrote (June 27th): "I hate that anxious worrying. It is lack of faith. It is your philosophy that troubles you, not your theology. What more can the devil do to us than to kill us? I conjure you who are so militant in other things, struggle against your own self, your worst enemy who is furnishing the devil so many weapons against you." He reminded him of God's power to maintain his cause and of His promises which are for us.[6] A few days later (June 29th) he wrote him: "If we fall Christ falls with us, the ruler of the world. And if He should fall then I would rather fall with Christ than stand with the emperor."

In a letter of June 30th from his associate, Veit Dietrich, to Melanchthon we learn the source of the immovable faith in which Luther was living and in the strength of which he was supporting his friends at Augsburg: "Daily he deals with God's Word. No day passeth that he does not use at least three hours for prayer, and this means the hours that would be the best for study. Once I was fortunate enough to hear him pray. Good God, what a faith spoke out of his words! He spoke with the reverence of one who is speaking to his God, and with such confidence and hope as one has who speaks with his Father and friend." He said "I know that Thou art God and Father. For this reason I am con-

[6]Koestlin-Kawerau, I, 213.

fident that Thou wilt put to shame all who are persecuting Thy children."[6]

3. THE ROMANISTS' REPLY TO THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

a. Deliberations

On the day after the Confession of the Lutherans had been heard the emperor convened the estates and divines who represented the traditional religion in order to counsel with them as to what should be done.

Dr. Eck and others offered the advice: The emperor should not argue longer with the Lutherans, but simply use the sword. According to Agricola one prince said: "They have delivered a document with black ink, the emperor should now draw lines through it with red ink." To this another replied "But look out, the 'presilje' (red ink in that day was prepared from the roots imported from Brazil) may squirt into your face." He referred to the political power of the Protestants. The emperor was not yet inclined to use force. He was impressed with the loyalty of these Lutherans. And after reading the Confession he is reported by Coelestin to have declared: "They do not err in the articles of Faith." (Cf. Richard p. 90). He was not inclined to tolerate a religious division, of course, and in the end he had to use force. But for any such measures he was not yet ready. He needed the Lutherans in this campaign against the Turks. Hase, in his Church History, remarks that the word nondum (not yet) was the watchword of Charles V: "Wait with striking until quite ready and then strike

[6] De Wette 4, 52f. 111. 115f. 120f. 123. 132; Enders 8, 43. 139. 156f. 161f. 163. 166; Koestlin-Kawerau II, 219.

hard." The moment to strike came in the battle at Muehlberg, 1547, when with one strike he destroyed the Smalcald Federation and broke the political power of Protestantism.

b. The "Confutation" Was Written

After some longer deliberation the Romanists declared, on July 7th, that they could not accept the role of a party which had to give account of itself. This would be their position in case they would now present a Confession of their own.[7] Neither would it have been easy to create anything comparable to the doctrinal part of the Augsburg Confession. Romanism before the decrees of the Council of Trent was doctrinally in a very confused state. The many statements of councils and popes between the oecumenic age and the age of the Reformation lacked unifying principle.

The only way open, then, was to prepare a refutation of the Lutheran Confession and to submit it to the diet. A committee of twenty theologians selected by Campeggius, was appointed for the work. Dr. Eck was among them, with other fanatic enemies of the Reformation. These men considered this an excellent opportunity to denounce Luther's writings in the name of the emperor, for the document was to be written in the emperor's name. In the first attempt one chapter of the work was given the superscription: "The fruit of Luther's teaching as it can be seen in Anabaptism." They labored hard to prepare a work that would be a general accusation of Protestantism. It comprised 351 pages. The manuscript has been found in the Vatican library.

[7] Th. Brieger, Beitraege zur Geschichte des Augsburger Reichstages, Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte, XII, 1891, p. 131.

On the 12th of July it was presented in Latin and German to the emperor and the estates. But three days later it was rejected as too long, too superficial and too insulting. The writers were told to do the work with more modesty, also with more thoroughness. They felt humiliated. Luther wrote from Coburg: "Poor carpenters make many chips and spoil much lumber." Eck complained of the trouble they had with the Lutherans. He thought the emperor was largely to blame. For, if he had followed the advice of the pope and simply used the sword everything would have been alright.[8] The second attempt also was a failure. But in their third endeavor they succeeded. Two of the emperor's secretaries had assisted them. Their work was now accepted.

We are accustomed to call this work the "Confutation" (Confutatio Pontifica), but its real title was "Responsio Augustanae Confessionis."[9]

c. Public Reading of the Confutation

On August 3rd, thirty-eight days after the delivery of the Lutheran Confession, the Confutation of the Romanists was publicly read. This reading took place in the chapel of the palace where the emperor was residing. It covered 29 pages, the articles following those of the Augsburg Confession. But the reading was no success. The secretary who read it confused the pages, due to a mistake in copying. The close of Article 24 and the whole of articles 25 and 26 were omitted. It happened also that an impossible statement concerning the mass

[8] **F. Pieper, Grundbekenntnis,** p. 41.

[9] For the history of this document see **J. Ficker, Die Konfutation des Augsburgischen Bekenntnisses, ihre Gestalt und ihre Geschichte, 1891.** Cf. Brieger in **Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte** XII, pp. 125ff. Spalatin 145; **Corp. Ref.,** II, 197.

as a repeated sacrifice, which had been stricken out, was read as a part of the text. It was an attempt to prove that the "This do" in the words of the institution are equal to "sacrifice" in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Here is another sample of the poor theology in the document: To prove that laymen are entitled to bread only in the Communion and should not want wine, I Samuel 2:36 was quoted: "And it shall come to pass that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say: Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."[10] The Lutherans were accused of having laughed loudly during the reading. They should be excused for this, however, when passages like these were presented for purposes of proof.

d. Estimate of the Document

The Roman Catholic Church has always been ashamed of the Confutation. The Latin text was not published until 1573,[11] the German not until 1808.[12] Melanchthon wrote concerning the official statements at the close of the diet, which expressed the emperor's rejection of the Lutheran Confession, that this was hard enough. But he added that the exceedingly childish and foolish ("kindish und laeppisch") materials in the Confutation has furnished the Lutherans much occasion for amusement.[13]

[10]See Melanchthon's, **Apology,** X, Art. 22, 10.

[11]**Corp. Ref.** XXVII, 82-183.

[12]Ibidem, 190-243.

[13]See **Corp. Ref.** II, 253. We find also the text in Kolde, Die **Augsburgische Konfession mit Beilagen,** addition No. 4. See its translation in English in vol. II, of H. E. Jacobs, **Book of Concord.**

4. MELANCHTHON'S REPLY IN THE APOLOGY OF THE AUGUSBURG CONFESSION

a. Copy of the Confutation Denied

The Lutherans wished to reply and defend their Confession, but they were denied a copy of the "Confutation." When they continued to plead the emperor promised to consider their request. They were finally told that a copy would be given them if they would promise not to reply but receive it solely to find their errors and to seek reconciliation with the Church.[14] This condition was not acceptable and they declared they would have to answer from notes that had been taken.[15]

b. Where Did Melanchthon Find the Remarkable Clarity of His Apology?

Something occurred which aided Melanchthon considerably in meeting all the points of Roman objection to the Lutheran Confession. For three months he represented the Lutherans on a large committee appointed by the emperor to consider the possibility of a doctrinal agreement between the two sides.

What is the explanation of such an endeavor at a reconciliation? At first the aim was simply to force the Confutation upon the Lutherans. But this course was not as simple as it first seemed. Should the Lutherans refuse, which was to be expected, they would have to be forced with arms. But who should undertake the war? The emperor, of course. This was the expectation of the Romanist princes in Germany. But Charles expected these princes to bear the expense and to furnish

[14]Kolde, **Historical Introduction to Mueller,** p. XXXVI.
[15]**Corp. Ref.** II, 72. Foerstermann, I, 179: 189ff.

the army for such an undertaking. They shrank from this plan. They knew how their own countries were saturated with Lutheran ideas and they felt that a favorable outcome of a civil war in Germany could not be predicted. On August 6th, the day after the copy of the Confutation had been denied the Lutherans, Philip of Hesse suddenly left Augsburg, indignant over the treatment of the Lutheran party. It was rumored he was preparing for war. This created a feeling of uneasiness. The result of the conference was the appointment of succeeding commissions which by continued conferences were to determine whether the two sides could reach an agreement.[16]

Space forbids us to follow the discussions of these three months. They may be studied in Chapter X of Dr. Richard's "Confessional History of the Lutheran Church," pp. 138-193.[17] The threatening attitude of the Romanists had an intimidating effect upon the Lutheran princes and especially upon Melanchthon. There was a deplorable inclination to concessions which called forth strong protests from Luther. He wrote to Melanchthon: "Be careful, do not sell more than you have;" to Spalatin: "I am sorry to hear that you have begun the wonderful work of reconciling the pope with Luther. But the pope declines, and Luther likes to be excused. Be careful that you do not work in vain. If you succeed in accomplishing something against both, then I will follow your example and reconcile Christ with

[16]Foerstemann, II, 188ff.

[17]The fundamental literature is found with the following authors as they have been quoted: Foerstemann, Schirrmacher, Coelestin, Chytraeus, J. J. Mueller. To these we would add especially, **J. Planck, Geschichte der Entstehung.....unsers protestantischen Lehrbegriffs,** 1781-1800, vol. III, book 7.

Belial."[19] Others also protested against the intended concessions of Melanchthon. Some harsh words were spoken. Jerome Baumgarten wrote to Laz. Spengler: "Philip is making himself more childish than a child."[20] We cannot follow the discussions of the individual articles of the Augsburg Confession, but we want to say that on some of the doctrinal articles there was an exchange of views that gave valuable light upon the actually existing differences. Here we are interested in Melanchthon's reply to the Confutation and repeat that the discussions of these three months contributed much to the wonderful clarity and strength of Melanchthon's Apology.

c. A Few Estimates of the Apology

Dr. Phil. Schaff wrote: "The Apology is a triumphant vindication of the Confession. It far excels the Confutation both in theological and literary merit, as in Christian tone and spirit. It is written with solid learning, clearness and moderation, though not without errors in exegesis and patristic quotations. It is seven times as large as the Confession itself. It is the most learned of the Lutheran symbols. It greatly strengthened the confidence of scholars in the cause of Protestantism. Its chief and permanent value consists in its being the oldest and most authentic interpretation of the Augsburg Confession by the author himself.[21] Lazarus Spengler wrote to Veit Dietrich: "We have received the Apology with great joy, and are full of hope that it will be of much

[19]De Wette 4, 140f.; 144f. Enders 8, 215. 220. 228f.

[20]**Corp. Ref.** II, 360-364. Landgrave Philip wrote to Zwingli: "Magister Philip moves backward like a lobster." **Zwinglii Opera,** ed. Schueler et Schulthes 2, 504f.

[21]Schaff, **Creeds of Christendom, I,** 241.

benefit even to coming generations.[22] Brenz wrote: "The Confession carries the Apology with it as on horseback."[23]

[22]M. M. Nayer, **Spengleriana**, 1830, p. 86.

The form of the Apology differs from that of the Confession. Written after it was evident that a reconciliation with Rome was impossible, it is strongly polemical. It refutes the positions of Roman scholasticism and exposes the unscripturalness of the peculiar Romanist theology by tracing it to its hiding place.

[23]**Corp. Ref.** II, 510.

CHAPTER VII

THE TEXTS OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

We have several books which deal with the texts of the Augsburg Confession in an especially exhaustive way: (1) E. Koellner, "Symbolik der Luth. Kirche," 1837, pp. 228-253. Much has been learned since these most thorough investigations of Koellner were pursued, but they have a great value even today. (2) A. F. C. Vilmar, "Die Augsburgische Konfession," 1870, pp. 15-35. In the section here indicated we have, in addition to the review of the texts, a helpful enumeration of past publications of the texts. (3) P. Tschackert, "Die unveraenderte Augsburgische Konfession, after the best copies of those who signed the Confession" (1901). It is "a critical edition indicating the most significant variations from the received text." (4) W. Gussmann, "Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Augsburgischen Glaubensbekenntnisses," 2 vols. (1911). The second of these volumes is of special interest here; the first deals with the matters that were discussed in our chapter III.

1. WHAT BECAME OF THE TWO COPIES DELIVERED AT THE DIET?

We learned that the emperor took both copies and gave the German to the Archbishop of Mayence to be preserved in the archives of the empire while he put the Latin copy in his own pocket.

a. What Became of the German Text

We know that in 1540 Dr. Eck received this text from the archives of Mayence to show the Lutherans in the colloquy at Worms (1541) that the original Augsburg Confession was fundamentally different from the altered edition of 1540, especially regarding Art. 10, on the

Lord's Supper. Some believe that the text was returned to the archive and that in 1546 it was taken or sent to the council of Trent and not returned. But the works of Koellner,[1] G. G. Weber,[2] Zoeckler[3] and Kolde[4] show that there is no ground for believing that after 1541 the text was returned to Mayence. And if it was not returned, and if there is nothing to show that it was taken to Trent, why should we look to the Vatican Library for a possible recovery? It may have been lost in Germany.

It is interesting to learn how the historians gradually found out about the disappearance of the German original from the archives at Mayence. The story is as follows: In 1566 the Elector Joachim II of Brandenburg was desirous of securing an authentic copy of this text and sent his court-preacher, George Coelestin, accompanied by Andrew Zoch, to Mayence with the instruction to make a copy of it. To the embarrassment of the custodians the original was absent, but in its place in the envelope was another German text dating from the time before the completion and delivery of the Confession. This text naturally did not have the signatures. These were added when it was published in 1572 in the Corpus Doctrinae Brandenburgicum. This was the German text incorporated in the "Book of Concord," that is, in the official collection of the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church (1888). The whole deception was finally discovered and exposed by George Gotlieb Weber in his "Geschichte der Augsburgischen Confession," 2 vols. 1783. 1784. As has been stated, the text shown Coelestin was a copy of the German text before it received its final form. We are told by W. Gussmann, however, who found that text as it stood June 15th, ten days before its delivery (cf. p. 50), that there is a remarkable agreement between that text and the one received by Coelestin and incorporated in the Book of Concord.[5]

[1] **Symbolik,** 320ff.
[2] **Die Augsburgische Konfession nach der Urschrift im Reichsarchiv,** 1781.
[3] **Die Augsburgische Confession,** 1870, pp. 40, 78.
[4] **Einleitung,** p. XXXf.
[5] During the last century the critics may have gone too far in discrediting the German text of the Book of Concord. This is the conclusion of **J. Ficker** in his article "Die Originale des Vierstaedterbekenntnisses und die originalen Texte der Augsburgischen Konfession" in **Geschichtliche Studien,** A. Hauck zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht, 1916, pp. 248ff.

b. What Became of the Latin Text?

It was deposited in the archives at Brussels.[6] Charles V was king over the Netherlands. But when his son, the fanatic Philip II of Spain, ascended the throne, and when Duke Alva in his name conducted his dreadful persecutions against the Protestants in that country, Philip wrote Duke Alva that on his return he should bring the Confession to Spain "in order that they (the Lutherans) do not hold it as a Koran," and that he should "be careful that the original be given him, and not a copy, and that no other, not even a trace of it be left so that so pernicious a book may be forever destroyed."[7] From a receipt given (1569) we know that when Alva returned to Spain (1573) he took the Confession with him. It has no doubt been destroyed.

The Latin text that came into the Book of Concord was Melanchthon's Editio Princeps, at first the octavo edition of 1531, which, however, was soon replaced by the quarto edition of that same year, the real Editio Princeps.

2. WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND BY THE "EDITIO PRINCEPS"?

When the Lutherans came back from Augsburg, Melanchthon published the Confession in both languages. This text we call the Editio Princeps.[8] How could this be done reliably since the originals were not in his possession? We must not forget that he had all the

[6]**W. Lindanus, Apologeticum ad Germanos,** etc. III, 1568, p. 92. **Hospinian, Concordia Discors,** 1583, p. 185.

[7]Kolde, Historical Introduction to Mueller, p. XXXI. The full letter was published by J. **Doellinger, Beitraege zur politischen und Kirchlichen Kulturgeschichte der letzten sechs Jahrhunderte I, 648. Also in Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte,** 1980 Vol. XXIX, Heft 1, p. 82. On p. 81 Adolf Hasendever remarks that Emperor Maximilian II of Austria had a copy of this Latin text, and he suggests that this copy might be found in the archives at Vienna.

[8]Given in the **Corp. Ref.** XXVII, 259ff.

material from which the copies for delivery had been made shortly before the public reading. When the Confession was being prepared and especially when it was about completed, copies were made from it by the different interested parties. Thirty-nine of these copies are known.[9] Some of them, it is true, were made after the Confession was yet very incomplete. But some were made after the completion of the document when the Lutherans were ready to deliver it. Much copying must have been done the last day and night. These copies have even the signatures affixed and are manuscripts regarded especially reliable. We have six copies and one French translation of the Latin text in its completed form. We have already learned that the emperor instructed his secretary to translate the Confession with utmost care into French and Italian and to see that not one word was omitted in the translation, and that the whole matter be correctly expressed. Cardinal Campeggius sent a copy of the Italian version to the pope. Other texts of the Confession were sent to the kings of England, France and Portugal, and to other countries.[10] From this we see the Confession was not confined to the words of the two original copies. Melanchthon, therefore, had enough material to reproduce a reliable text of the Confession. This does not mean, of course, that occasionally in such reproduction he may not have made a thought clearer or stronger than it was in the original. In fact we have an illustration of this in Art. 13 where the closing paragraph which rejects the ex opere operato is an addition to what was in the original texts.

[9]P. Tschackert, as quoted.
[10]J. J. Mueller, pp. 585ff. Coelestin I, 141. Salig I, 210ff., Schirrmacher, 93.

3. OUR ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

Here we should mention first the text of the Confession in the "New Market Edition" of the Book of Concord, prepared by the Henkel Brothers (1851 and again 1854). According to the "preface" of the first print, the Augsburg Confession was "furnished" by Ambrose and Socrates Henkel. It was translated from the German Editio Princeps as found in a Leipzig edition of the Book of Concord of 1790. This translation was then compared with "a copy of the original German Dresden edition of 1580," which was in the possession of "Rev. C. P. (Porterfield?) Krauth" who was at that time at Winchester, Va., near New Market. The work was further compared with the Latin Editio Princeps as found in Hase's edition of the Book of Concord (1846). In the preface to the second print, 1854, we read that for this edition "the Augsburg Confession was revised by Rev. C. P. (Philip) Krauth, D. D., Professor in the Theol. Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa."

In 1868 appeared "The Augsburg Confession" with Introduction and Notes by Charles Porterfield Krauth. The text here offered is introduced with the words "literally translated from the original Latin, with the most important additions of the German text incorporated." It was this translation, further revised by Dr. C. P. Krauth, Jun., that was taken over by Henry Eyster Jacobs in his "Book of Concord," vol. I (1882). The text of the Augsburg Confession (English) in Ph. Schaff's "Creeds of Christendom" (vol. III) also was furnished by Dr. Krauth. It is a still further revision of his translation contained in his above mentioned book on the Augsburg Confession.

As to the pioneer work in translating the Augsburg Confession the reader must be reminded of the fact that the first translation was made 1536 by Richard Taverner (translator of the English Bible of 1539); not from the Editio Princeps, however, but from the second Latin or octavo edition. Dr. H. E. Jacobs, in a critical review of Taverner's work (1888) made investigations after which he felt justified in making the statement that "the translation of the Augsburg Confession, credited (in his above quoted 'Book of Concord') to Dr. Charles Porterfield Krauth—is in reality a reprint of a sixteenth century English translation, published in "The Harmony of the Confessions" in 1586. This "Harmony" was reprinted with slight changes in Hall's "Harmony" of 1844 and, as Dr. Jacobs adds, "was either made upon the basis of Taverner, or resulted from the correction of an inferior translation by the free use of Taverner."[11]

The English text of the Augsburg Confession in the "People's Edition" of the Book of Concord (1911), edited by H. E. Jacobs, is a translation of the Latin Editio Princeps of 1530-31 "under the authority of the synods now merged into the United Lutheran Church and of the Joint Synod of Ohio." (Cf. the preface, p. 4, and compare the note on p. 33). There is also a translation of the Augsburg Confession into English by J. D. Jacobson, 1878 (Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn.) See its comparison with Taverner, the Harmony of 1686 and Krauth in Dr. Jacob's book on Taverner. It represents a thorough revision of the text

[11]See H. E. Jacobs, Preface to the People's Edition of "The Book of Concord," p. 4. Cf. the same writer's just mentioned book on Taverner's translation. Preface, p. IV. (United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia, Pa.)

by Charles Porterfield Krauth in his "Augsburg Confession" of 1868.

The English text in the "Triglotta" of the Missouri Synod (1921) presents itself as being "based on the original German and Latin texts, respectively, and on the existing English translations, chiefly those incorporated in H. E. Jacobs' 'Book of Concord'."

4. MATERIAL AGREEMENT OF THE EDITIO PRINCEPS WITH THE ORIGINALS

With the original texts lost, how can we conclude that Melanchthon's Editio Princeps agrees with the originals? This is an interesting question. There are two ways of answering this: (1) The one is the method followed by P. Tschackert in his book "Die unveraenderte Augsburgische Konfession, deutsch und lateinisch, nach den besten Handschriften aus dem Besitze der Unterzeichner" (Leipzig, 1910). He compares all the existing texts and copies, giving preference to those near the time when the Confession was completed, and out of their agreement he constructs a text. Then he draws the conclusion that the lost originals cannot have differed materially from this critically constructed text. But (2) there are scholars also, of whom W. Gussmann (cf. p. 50) is one, who take the position that we have practically solved the problem of the German text with the discovery of the Nuremberg (Nue) texts 1 and 2 (of p. 50), and that further light, if more is needed, will come from the archives in the same way. It seems to us that both methods are right, and that already we have actual knowledge of what the fathers of the Lutheran Church wished to profess and did profess on that memorable day

at Augsburg. Suppose we should recover the originals and find that Melanchthon, just before the delivery had stricken out a word or a sentence. This would not affect the Confession of the Lutheran Church. The Augsburg Confession is not a creed in the sense that we as a church are committed to every omission and addition of its author.

5. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN AN ALTERED AND AN UNALTERED AUGSBURG CONFESSION

There is a large literature on the Variata and Invariata subject. We refer first of all to the very scholarly, exhaustive and reliable investigation by O. Zoeckler, "Die Augsb. Konfession," pp. 35-74. Compare Kolde's "Introduction to Mueller," pp. XXI ff. Against this careful presentation there are many writings of a "Melanchthonian School" which came in on the wings of the union movement in Germany during the nineteenth century. In America we had a strong representative of this school in Dr. J. W. Richard, professor in the Lutheran seminary at Gettysburg, Pa. He gave his views in the book to which we have been referring. ("Confessional History of the Lutheran Church"), pp. 209-233. The opposite side was taken by Schmauk-Benze in their work "Confessional Principle," from which we have been quoting also. We have tried to summarize the essentials of this historic controversy in an article in the Lutheran Church Review, republished in a pamphlet "Are We Justified in Distinguishing Between An Altered and An Unaltered Augsburg Confession," Lutheran Literary Board, 1911 (43 pages).

a. Melanchthon had the habit of changing the editions of the Confession. We learned of changes in his first edition, the Latin Editio Princeps. The changes in the printed German text at the same time are far more radical. Articles 20, 22 and 28 are almost new articles; 4, 13 and 18 are very different from our received text. This text is almost "a private work of Melanchthon."[12]

[12]Tschackert, as quoted, p. 1.

In the second Latin edition of 1531 there are changes.[13] The new German edition of 1533 introduces itself with the remark "diligently improved" (mit vleis emendirt). Thus there are many changes. And still, as Kolde ("Einleitung") points out, none of these are alterations of doctrinal importance; all were made merely for emphasis and clearness. It is interesting to know that in that day it was not felt that an officially delivered text should not be changed. They used a new and changed text as we today prefer the last edition of a book. But now came

b. The Edition of 1540 and Its Successors (Veriata)

This one alone is meant when we speak of the "altered" Augsburg Confession (Variata) in distinction from the "unaltered" (Invariata). It is published in Latin only.[14] It is a document that claims to be authoritative in a special sense. The impression is given that this edition is simply a reprint of the Editio Princeps, the introduction telling of those unauthorized publications which made an authoritative edition imperative. Nothing indicates that this is a new redaction of the Confession. At the close the names of those who signed the Confession at Augsburg are given as before.

What Are the Changes in This Edition?

We can divide them into three classes: (1) The order of articles has been changed. In part one, Article 12, of Repentance and 11, of Confession are transposed. In

[13]Weber II, 68-91.

[14]The text is found in the **Corp. Ref.** XXVI, 343ff., also in Kolde's little book of texts **(Die Augsb. Konf. mit Beilagen).** This text is translated into English in H. E. Jacob's two volume edition of the **Book of Concord.**

part two, the first five articles are given in an altogether different order. (2) Several articles have been considerably enlarged, mostly, as in preceding editions, for instruction and distinctness. (3) Real changes of doctrinal substance are found. On this latter class we must go into details.

Expression of Free Will (Synergism)

Professor Zoeckler says: "In this category we can count, in a certain measure, the long discourses in Articles 4, 5 and 20 with their emphasis upon repentance and good works in a manner characteristic of synergism and corresponding with the new edition of Melanchthon's Loci of 1535; also, prompted by the same interest, the milder interpretation of some expressions in Art. 18 concerning free will.[15] Kolde agrees with Zoeckler. He also sees in the emphasis on repentance and good works in Articles 5 and 20, Melanchthon's inclination to synergism; he observes the same tendency in Art. 18, if taken together with the position of Melanchthon in the editions of his Loci since 1535.[16] This would agree with the following remark of R. Seeberg in his History of Doctrine: "There are two points in which Melanchthon consciously deviates from the doctrinal standpoint of Luther; in the doctrine of Free Will and in that of the Lord's Supper."[17]

Expression On the Lord's Supper

The alterations in Art. 10 of the Lord's Supper are especially familiar to us. Two very important phases of

[15]Zoeckler, p. 37.
[16]Kolde, **Historical Introduction to Mueller,** XXV, Pre. II, p. 249.
[17]Engl. ed. II, 336. He expresses the same in vol. IV of the latest German edition, 1920, pp. 446ff.

this very short article are omitted in the edition of 1540. These are the "truly present" (vere adsint) and the phrase "we disapprove of those who teach otherwise" (improbant secus docentes). The changes can best be shown by the following parallel exhibition of the two texts with the omitted phrases of the Invariata (Editio Princeps) in italics. Before quoting the two texts it may be well to remember that according to Tschackert's reconstruction of a critical text the tenth article of the Editio Princeps agrees in every word with the original Latin copy delivered at Augsburg:

Invariata	Variata
De coena Domini docent, Quod corpus et sanguis Christi *vere adsint* et distribuantur vescentibus in coena Domini, *et improbant secus docentes.*	De coena Domini docent, quod cum pane et vino *exhibeantur* corpus et sanguis Christi vescentibus in coena Domini.

How to Interpret the Variations?

It cannot be said that the phraseology of the Variata clearly expresses a new doctrine of the Lord's Supper. It must also be remembered that no such changes were made in the German editions used with the Latin Variata; also that the Apology which accompanied this Variata text of the Confession had the same reading it had when it appeared in 1531 with the Editio Princeps. But is this sufficient proof that the two characteristic omissions had no doctrinal significance whatever? To answer this question a number of things must be considered. Remember that the Latin text of the Variata was the text for the theologians, and this was the text

which was changed. Remember also the situation at that time. The South Germans, led by Bucer, who had always been on the side of the Zwinglians, agreed with Luther on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper at the Wittenberg Concord of 1536, and it appeared that the Zwinglians also might finally accept this doctrine. The doctrinal formula on the basis of which the agreement took place was mildly Lutheran.[18] Let us recall also that at the convention held at Smalcald in 1537 the theologians were commissioned to revise the Augsburg Confession so there would be no conflict with the Wittenberg Concord.[19] Furthermore, with the death of Zwingli in the battle of Cappel (1531) the danger of an invasion of Germany by his conception of the Eucharist as just a memorial seemed to be past. In place of this the South German cities were influenced by the median conception of Bucer who was leading toward Calvinism with his doctrine of spiritual presence of Christ in the Supper. Melanchthon had not changed his Lutheran conception of the Eucharist, but he had lost the appreciation of the difference between Luther and his South German opponents. We agree with Kolde when he says that in omitting the two phrases "truly present" and "we disapprove of those who teach otherwise" "Melanchthon wished to secure for himself and others a basis on which to cooperate with the Swiss theologians;"[20] also with Planck, an outspoken Melanchthonian, when he says: "Melanchthon made these changes in order to make it possible for the Reformed to accept the Augs-

[18]See the article in the **Lutheran Encyclopedia** (Jacobs and Haas) on the "Wittenberg Concord."

[19]**Corp. Ref.** III, 267.

[20]Intr. to Mueller, p. XXVI.

burg Confession without sacrifiicing their doctrine of the Lord's Supper."[21] Melanchthon's own words at the convention of Regensburg (1541) suggest he had changed nothing in substance, but had simply employed some milder terms.[22] Relative to this Kolde remarks: "In the opinion that he had not changed anything he may have deceived himself, which has happened to him quite often.[23]

First Attitude of the Lutherans Toward the Variata

At first the Lutherans did not oppose this edition. Brenz, who watched over pure Lutheran doctrine praised it. He wrote Veit Dietrich: "I like to compare this last edition with the former editions. I find that much is changed, but I know that Philippus does not change anything thoughtlessly. If I think over the reasons for these changes then it is remarkable, what fruit I derive out of such reading."[24] Outside of the absence of censure for changing an official document there is nothing strange in this expression. Brenz may have been thinking especially of the many passages in the Variata by which the doctrine of justification is made clearer and has been better established by Scripture. Regarding Art. 10 there was not the nervousness of ten years before at Augsburg. The Wittenberg Concord (1536) had created an irenic feeling on that subject. It was the period of the history of the Reformation when the Lutherans expressed good-will toward the orphaned Zwinglians. It was hoped that under their present leaders and especially

[21]Planck, as quoted, IV, Book I, pp. 12-14.
[22]**Corp. Ref.** IV, 43.
[23]**Die Augsb. Konf. mit Beilagen,** p. 13.
[24]**Corp. Ref.** IV, 737.

under the mediating efforts of Bucer they would gradually adopt the Lutheran conception of the Lord's Supper, so mildly expressed in the Wittenberg Concord. Luther himself wanted to end the warfare against his former opponents. In a letter of 1537 to the followers of Zwingli he prays to God that he might be permitted to complete the work of reconciliation begun in the Wittenberg Concord, and he asks them to work for the same end. For himself and his friends he promises that in writing and preaching they would be quiet and mild in order not to interfere with the developing agreement. Pointing to the difference in the doctrine of the Sacrament he wrote: "Since we do understand each other fully, it is well to exercise mutual kindness and hope the best until all turpid waters have fully settled."[25] If we keep in mind that the Variata was published when so much peaceful sentiment was expressed toward the Zwinglians, the attitude of the Lutheran Theologians toward the Variata, even with regard to Art. 10, is better understood.

The Lutherans Change Their Attitude Toward the Variata

The hope of Luther did not materialize. He found that his peaceful attitude toward the Zwinglians was interpreted to mean that he had abandoned his doctrine of the real presence in the Supper. The Wittenberg Concord had accomplished nothing. Between 1538 and 1541 Calvin was in Strassburg, and with his ascendency,

[25]The letter of the Swiss to which Luther replied is found in Hospinian, **Concordia Discors** II, 151; also in Enders, **Briefwechsel** XI, 157ff. Luther's answer also is given by Enders, XI, 294. Compare Koestlin-Kawerau, II, 350, 352.

Bucer's theology became the "steping-stone to Calvinism." Melanchthon, under the influence of both Bucer and Calvin, had been growing in the conviction that the doctrine of the spiritual presence did not violate a special religious interest. The draft for the Reformation of Cologne by both Bucer and Melanchthon (1544) brought the matter to a climax. It was at this time, two years before his death, that Luther wrote his "Kurz Bekenntnis" of the sacrament, reaffirming his doctrine of the real presence.[26] The Cyptro-Calvinistic controversies soon followed. Calvinism, favored by the "Philipists," entered upon an aggressive propaganda in Germany with a constant appeal to the text of Article 10 in the Variata. The literary conflict between Joachim Westphal and Calvin followed.[27] The Palatinate was lost to Calvinism; the Lutherans also nearly lost Saxony.[28] Anhalt and parts of Hesse followed. Elector Sigismund of Brandenburg was converted to Calvinism. This was an event fraught with grave consequences for Lutheranism. It is in this history that we find the historical roots of the Prussian Church Union (1817). In the light of all this the changes of the Variata in Art. 10 stood as an unfortunate concession which later, in the interest of historic Lutheranism, had to be disclaimed. Calvin himself, in a public reply to Westphal, declared he could accept the Augsburg Confession as it was interpreted by its own author (in the Variata).[29]

[26]See Koestlin-Kawerau II, 581ff. For the text of this brief, sharp writing see Luther's Works, Weimar ed. vol. 54.

[27]See the writer's book **"The Lutherans in the Movements for Church Union,"** pp. 22-25.

[28]Ibid, pp. 25-29.

[29]Salig, I, 491. **Staehelin, John Calvin I,** 234. Cf. Zoeckler, **p. 41.**

What Is the Lesson?

The Variata or the altered Augsburg Confession of 1540ff became significant in the history of the Lutheran Church because of its two specifically Melanchthonian principles, relative to (1) the Freedom of the Will and (2) the Lord's Supper.

On the first of these points the Lutheran Church follows Luther in the Augustinian emphasis upon grace (sola gratia). She cannot admit the Melanchthonian coordination (synergism) of the human and divine factor in conversion which in religion is always a mistake, because the human must ever remain dependent upon God. Synergism says: "God makes the beginning and the will of man responds by its own natural powers. To a certain extent, although feebly the will can add, help and cooperate with the Spirit: can qualify and prepare itself for grace: can accept grace and believe the Gospel."[30] The Variata expresses this theology in Articles 18 and 20. Secondly, the Lutheran Church cannot abandon her doctrine of the real presence in the Lord's Supper. She cannot make that "truly present" a matter of indifference by disregarding the improbant. As soon as this is done she loses her identity. Especially is this true in countries outside of Europe, under free church conditions, where the Lutheran Church is in special need of her doctrinal standards.

The term "unaltered" should not be confused with "unalterable." The Lutherans do not believe in unalterable or infallible Confessions. Luther himself changed for print the Smalcald Articles after they had been formally adopted, and it has never disturbed the Lutheran

[30]See the **Formula of Concord,** Part I, Art. 2, §11.

Church when she found out later that the so-called "Appendix" to these articles is not by Luther but from the hand of Melanchthon. The Lutheran theologians have always made the distinction between the Word of God as norma normans and the Confessions as a man-made norma normata. The term "unaltered" simply means that the Lutheran Church, at a critical time in her history, had to struggle for her life by refusing to accept an "altered" form of the Augsburg Confession which in features of special significance undertook to create bridges for a church union and which, if the promotors had succeeded, would have served as one step in leading to the absorption of the Lutheran Church by the Reformation of Zwingli, Bucer and Calvin.

We must not overlook the fact, however, that the History of Doctrine and Symbolics of today see the essentials of Lutheranism and its genius in many more things than just in these much discussed doctrines of the Lord's Supper and Free Will. The differing principles between the two churches, which in the age of the Reformation were not yet in evidence, have worked themselves out in distinctive expressions of life, reminding us of the "other spirit" (den anderen Geist) of which Luther spoke at Marburg.

CHAPTER VIII

CHARACTER AND CONTENTS OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

We shall not undertake to interpret in detail the articles of the Confession. This the writer has done in his other writings on the Augsburg Confession mentioned at the close of the "Introductory Remarks" to this book. Still, the present writing would seem incomplete without at least a brief chapter on the Character and Message of the Confession.

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONFESSION

The Augsburg Confession bears the marks of a document drafted and worded to meet a special situation. It is a "Gelegenheitschrift."

The Lutherans claimed to be the true Catholic Church. They were proving their right to exist not only by insisting they were in harmony with Scripture, but by pointing to their agreement with the Fathers of the early Church. In this they were thinking especially of the Fathers of about the first five centuries; in fact they thought they could claim agreement even with the truly representative teachers of later ages. Thus they wrote in the Epilogue to Part I of the Confession, following Article 21: "This is about the sum of doctrine, in which, as can be seen, there is nothing that varies from the

Scriptures, or from the Church Catholic, or from the Church of Rome as known from its writers."

There was much diplomacy in taking this position. Melanchthon, the writer of the Loci knew the fundamental difference between the Lutherans and the Romanists was in the field of doctrine. But at Augsburg he did not want to make this difference the object of a charge. He simply took the position: We are in complete harmony with the ancient Church, with the Apostolic, the true Catholic Church. We condemn all heretics rejected by the Catholic Church; the Manicheans, the Gnostics, the Samosatenes, the Arians, the Pelagians, the Novatians, the Donatists, also the new Samosatenes, and the Anabaptists. If there still were doctrinal differences between the Lutherans and Romanists, due especially to the restoration of the doctrine of justification by faith, the responsibility for this difference was not to be laid at the door of the Lutherans; their doctrine on this subject was scriptural, catholic and in harmony with the teaching of Irenaeus, Ambrose, Hilary, Augustine, St. Bernard and others. The Lutherans simply demanded tolerance while their antagonists wanted to crowd them out of the Church and have them treated as heretics. The Lutherans wished to admit a real difficulty only with regard to the removal of a number of abuses. But here again they claimed to be in true harmony with the old Catholic Church at the time when there was no withholding of the cup in the Communion, when the marriage of priests was not forbidden, when auricular confession was not compulsory, when fasting and monastic vows were not taught to be meritorious, when the "power of the keys" was exercised

simply through Word and Sacrament and when jurisdiction of bishops was limited to the affairs of the Church and not extended to worldly matters. Many of the Lutheran party were too optimistic or rather too diplomatic in this matter. Luther never deceived himself as to the deep chasm between his theology and that of his opponents. He knew that it was in the fundamentals of doctrines where the real difference was lying. And his antagonists knew it equally as well.

Certain weaknesses observable in the Augsburg Confession are due to a diplomatic method of procedure. For instance, the divine right of the papacy was not attacked, nor the claim of an indelible character of the priesthood. We read nothing of the priesthood of all believers. Luther also missed the rejection of purgatory.

Regarding the Lord's Supper the "real presence" is clearly expressed. But there is a diplomatic ambiguity in the lack of an express rejection of transubstantiation. Poor Dr. Eck, he never knew what to do with Art. 10 of the Augsburg Confession. There was the satisfactory phrase "truly present," and still he knew the adoption of transubstantiation was purposely left out.

Much is omitted and evaded in the Augsburg Confession, which from the standpoint of a creed, should have been spoken of. For Luther it was "stepping too softly." Yet he called it "a most beautiful Confession." To Melanchthon he wrote: "I canonize you."[1] What was it that reconciled Luther to this Confession? It was the fact that the doctrine of salvation with jusification by faith was clearly expressed. All is centered about the one doctrine which we observe as a golden thread run-

[1]Enders, 8, 259.

ning through all the articles. Melanchthon was too optimistic when he thought that at heart the "Catholic" Church of the past was overwhelmingly evangelical. Later he saw clearer in this matter.

Still, a close examination of the Confession shows that, notwithstanding some omissions, such as Luther had observed, the Augsburg Confession has succeeded wonderfully in giving complete expression to the fundamental doctrinal character of the Lutheran Reformation. This will be observed when we take time to study the Articles of the Confession.

2. OUTLINING THE CONTENTS

The reader will keep in mind that the Augsburg Confession is composed of 28 articles: the first 21 being the doctrinal, the last 7 dealing with the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church. These last articles, however, contain much that is supplementary to the doctrinal articles. The customary superscriptions over the articles were not in the original documents.

We shall present first the following simple outline of our own. Then we shall add another one. Both together may be of aid to pastors wanting to preach on some kind of a topical basis. For an analysis of the individual articles see the writer's books quoted in the "Preface."

AN OUTLINE:

I. The Doctrine of God: Art. 1, of God, the Triune.

II. On man: Art. 2, of Original Sin; supplemented by Art. 18, of Free Will; supplemented further by Art. 21, of the Cause of Sin.

III. The Son of God: Art. 3. In connection with this

may be taken Art. 21, of the invocation of saints, with the thought: Christ is the only Mediator.

IV. The central doctrine of Man's Salvation: Art. 4 of Justification; 6 of the New Obedience; 5 of the Origin and Cause of Faith; supplemented by Art. 20, on Faith and Good Works. Art. 12, of Repentance may be thought of in this connection.

V. The doctrine of the Church: Art. 7, what the Church is? Art. 8, on the administration of the sacraments by insincere ministers (guarding the objectivity of the Church). Compare parts of 28 regarding other considerations.

VI. The means of grace: Art. 5 together with articles 9-13, on the sacraments: Baptism (9), Eucharist (10), Confession (11), Use of the Sacraments (13). Compare 22 and 24.

VII. The Ministry: Art. 14 (cf. 5). See also parts of 28.

VIII. Church Orders and Customs: Art. 15. Compare 26, 27 and 28.

IX. Civil Affairs: Art. 16. Compare Art. 23.

X. Christ's Return for Judgment: Art. 17.

Another Outline

Here we present the much quoted outline by O. Zoeckler, given after the translation of J. W. Richard:[2] It has been valued for its systematic comprehensiveness.

I. Fundamental Part

(Fundamental Statement of the Doctrine of Salvation According to Its Chief Factors).

[2]**Conf. History of the Lutheran Church,** p. 102f. Compare the translation by H. E. Jacobs, Book of Concord I, p. 35f.

(Articles 1-6 and supplementary Articles 18-21).

1. The Presuppositions of Salvation
   - Art. 1. God
   - Art. 2. Sin—its effect on Free-Will (18) and its Cause (19)
   - Art. 3. The Redeemer (Prejudice to his sole Mediatorship through the Worship of the Saints (Art. 21)
2. Salvation Itself
   - Art. 4. Justification
   - Art. 5. The Word of God and the Ministerial Office the ground of justification.

   Faith and Works (Art. 20)

II. Special Soteriological Part

(The Mediation of Salvation in the Church)

(Art. 7-17 and practical-polemical Articles 22-28)

1. The Objective Mediation of Salvation in the Church
   - a. The Church and the means of grace in themselves: Art. 7, 8.
   - b. The Sacraments of the Church.
     - Art. 9. Baptism.
     - Art. 10. Lord's Supper (Both Forms: Art. 22; Mass: Art. 24).
     - Art. 11 and 12. Confession, Repentance (Worship and Discipline in relation to Confession: Art. 25).
     - Art. 13. The Use of the Sacraments.
   - c. The Service of the Church or the Office of the Means of Grace: Art. 14. (Church Government: (Consecration of Priests: Art. 23; Power of the Bishops: Art. 28).

2. The Subjective or Ethical Mediation of Salvation.
   a. Its Realization in This Life.
      First: Art. 15, in the Regulation of the Church (for example, Distinction of Meats: Art. 26).
      Second: Art. 16, in the State and in the Family (compare articles on Priesthood (23) and cloister-vows (27).
   b. Their Final Consummation through Art. 17: The Return of Christ.

CHAPTER IX

THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION FOR GERMANY

1. WHAT WAS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONFESSION FROM THE DIET OF AUGSBURG (1530) TO THE RELIGIOUS PEACE TREATY AT AUGSBURG (1555)?

When Melanchthon prepared the Confession in 1530 there was no intention of creating a Creed to which the pastors and churches should obligate themselves in any formal way. It was an age of endeavor at confessional statements, of course. In 1528 Luther wrote for himself a beautiful confession of faith![1] The Schwabach Articles were in themselves a Confession. And also was the Augsburg Confession. Yet this Confession was simply intended as a document by which the Lutherans might give account of their doctrinal position before the emperor and the estates of Germany. It was, therefore, the princes who signed the Confession, not the theologians. But the fact that at the historic Augsburg Diet, the essential principles of the Lutheran Reformation had been publicly professed naturally created among all the followers of Luther a very high esteem for this docu-

[1]It is published by **K. Graul, Distinctive Doctrines of the Different Christian Confessions,** re-edited by R. Seeberg and translated from the 12th ed. in the English by K. Martens, 1987 (Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, Ohio).

ment. All, of their own free will, wished to be adherents of this Confession and wanted to be known as such by their opponents.

Soon after the death of Luther came the sad day of the battle at Muehlberg (1457) where Charles V succeeded in crushing the Smalcald Federation and with it the political power of German Protestantism. Duke Morris, a Lutheran prince and son-in-law of Philip of Hesse, had been promised the electorship over Saxony for which he turned traitor to the Lutheran cause. Philip of Hesse and John Frederick of Saxony (son of the elector who represented the Lutherans at Augsburg) became his prisoners. Landgrave Philip of Hesse, especially, held a prisoner in care of Spanish soldiers, experienced years of severe suffering.[2]

At last the "invincible" emperor needed but one more victory. He had yet to overcome the principles of the Lutheran Reformation! Again, as in the closing days of the Augsburg Diet, he appointed commissions of theologians of both sides, charged them with the task of finding formulas for agreement. Again Melanchthon was at the colloquies. On several of these occasions he met Calvin. We have the story of the "Interims" and the dark days for Protestantism when it seemed that all was lost. But in 1552 Elector Morris, grieved over the emperor's treatment of his father-in-law Philip, the Landgrave of Hesse, and for other reasons suddenly marched against Charles V. Unprepared as he was at

[2]Here we could mention **W. W. Rockwell, "Die Doppelehe des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen,** No. 83, in the **Schriften des Vereins fuer Reformationsgeschichte.**

the time, Charles fled over the Alps toward Spain. Broken in spirit he now retired from public life. This brought the temporary agreement at Passau in 1552, which was followed in 1555 by the Augsburg Religious Peace Treaty. The emperor had failed to crush the principles of the Reformation! A settlement was effected in which the empire was forced to recognize a Lutheran Church! This was a great historical event.

We return to the question with which we started this discussion: What was the significance of the Augsburg Confession between 1530 and 1555? It was largely a political document. This does not mean it had no confessional value among the Lutherans themselves. But the question at all those forced conferences was: What do the Lutherans teach according to the documents delivered at Augsburg, and what may they be induced to concede to Roman dogma and Roman practice? At the same time the Romanists kept careful watch that the Lutherans did not substitute an altered Confession in place of the original document. We remember how Dr. Eck, in 1541, secured the original German copy from Mayence and made complaint when he found that in the Variata of 1540 the text of Art. 10 on the Lord's Supper had been changed. At the Augsburg Religious Peace Treaty, 1555, the Lutherans were recognized as "adherents of the Augsburg Confession," and an agreement was signed according to which among all Protestants these only were to enjoy toleration. The Anabaptists, Zwinglians and Calvinists were not yet included. The Reformed were recognized about a century later, as we shall see.

2. WHAT WAS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONFESSION FROM 1555 TO THE END OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR, 1648?

It continued to be regarded as a political document. The Reformed could enjoy the provisions of the Augsburg Religious Peace Treaty only as adherents to the Augsburg Confession ("Augsburgische Confessionsverwandte"). But there always was the difficulty regarding Art. 10, on the Lord's Supper. At the colloquy in Regensburg, 1542, even Calvin subscribed to the Augsburg Confession, but, as he later stated in reply to Westphal, he had done so with the interpretation of Art. 10 by Melanchthon himself.[3] After 1555 there were many shades of Reformed Churches in Germany, not Calvinistic in the doctrine of predestination, but holding to Calvin's concept of the Lord's Supper. It was about the time of the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War, especially, that these churches found themselves in a precarious situation. At that time they used the Variata text of Art. 10 to secure for themselves the benefits of the Augsburg Religious Peace Treaty. The Jesuits, especially, endeavored to bring about war. Without ceasing they pointed to the continued changes of Melanchthon in the successive editions of the Confession, claiming that Luther himself and the princes had acquiesced.[4] In 1569 Emperor Maximillian II took steps to investigate the original copy of the Augsburg Confession.[5] Later, Ferdinand II did the same. While the furies of the war were raging there was an extended

[3]By this he meant the Variata. Cf. Staehlin, **Joh. Calvin I,** 234.
[4]O. Zoeckler, pp. 67-70.
[5]G. G. Weber, **Kritische Geschichte I,** 127ff.

controversy between the Jesuits and the Lutheran theologians. The former insisted that the Lutherans, by changing the Confession, had no claim to the promises of the Augsburg Peace Treaty. The latter defended themselves with the claims that with the Variata the Editio Princeps was recognized as the basic text. This, indeed, had been the agreement at the "Day of Princes" at Naumburg, 1561.[6] During this whole conflict a Lutheran consciousness of the difference between the altered and unaltered texts of the Confession grew and stimulated the Lutheran theologians to further investigation of the subject.

3. THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION AFTER THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

In the Westphalian Peace Treaty at Osnabrueck, in 1648, the Reformed party of Germany was recognized with the Lutherans as "adherents of the Augsburg Confession." This was accomplished against the protest of the Lutherans, led by Electoral Saxony, by Brandenburg's elector Frederick William I, commonly called the "Great Elector." This was at the historical time when the Hohenzollern became a leading factor in the affairs of Germany. But the princes of this dominion were Reformed, while their subjects were Lutherans, having resisted all invitations and measures to follow their rulers in adopting Calvinism. In the Palatinate, in Nassau, Anhalt and Hesse-Cassel the people had become Re-

[6]The chief writing on the part of the Lutherans was a publication of the Leipzig theologians in 1628, which has been printed in numerous editions: **"Notwendige Verteidigung des Heil. Roemischen Reichs Chur-Fuersten und Staende Augapfels, naemlich der wahren, reinen, ungeaenderten Augsburgischen Confession uns des dieselbe gerichteten Religionsfrieds.** Compare the very interesting report of this whole situation by O. Zoeckler, pp. 67ff.

formed. At Osnabrueck the "Great Elector" spoke for his fellow-believers in these countries. As elector of Brandenburg he could support his claim of being an "adherent of the Augsburg Confession," by stating that the text used in his country was not the Variata, but the Editio Princeps. He was quick to see that with Saxony's plans prevailing, the political existence of all the Reformed dominions in Germany was threatened. Accordingly, the Reformed in Germany were recognized at Osnabrueck as adherents (Konfessionsverwandte) of the Augsburg Confession. And, inasmuch as it was the Editio Princeps that was used in Brandenburg, the "Great Elector" refused to qualify the Augsburg Confession of his acceptance as the "unaltered," because this term was intended to express opposition to the Reformed.[7]

Thus after the Westphalian Peace Treaty of 1648 the Augsburg Confession continued to have a political significance. The treaty recognized the Reformed with the Lutherans. But it is of interest to note that the treaty recognized these two groups only; the Anabaptists, the Socinians *et al.* were not included. These were regarded as "sects" which needed a special permission for their existence. This was never changed until the time of the separation between Church and State in the "Weimar Constitution" of the new Germany after the World War (1920). Now all denominational parties have a right to organize "churches." This was an event which is bound to stimulate interest in the question of a closer definition of the term "sect."[8]

[7]Neve, **The Lutherans in the Movements for Church Union, 1921,** pp. 71-77. Cf. Kawerau on **"Sigismund"** in PRE 18, 331ff. **J. Stahl, Die Lutherische Kirche und die Union,** 1860, p. 470. PRE, 9, 364, 18, V. 93, 94. **Wangemann, Una Sancta** I, 1, 133-7. Tschackert in PRE XIX, 246, 28ff.

[8]Our reference is to discussions such as the following: **H. Schmidt,**

Handbuch der Symbolik, 1890, pp. 460-491: **"Allg. Charakteristik der Sekte und Haerese"; F. Loofs, Symbolik oder Christliche Konfessionskunde,** 1902, p. 74; the article by G. Kawerau in PRE, vol. 18, p. 157ff.: **"Sektenwesen in Deutschland"; H. Mulert, Konfessioniskunde,** 1924, pp. 9ff. Compare the writer's article in **Zeitschrift fuer Systematische Theologie** (C. Stange), 1929, p. 180ff. **"Was ist aus unserer alten Symbolik geworden?"**

CHAPTER X

THE DOCTRINAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

Space forbids us to follow the long history of the doctrinal significance of the Confession in the Lutheran Church. It would take us to Germany, to the Scandinavian countries, to America, to Australia, to the mission fields and to Germany's diaspora.

We shall mention the following literature on the subject. For the present purpose it is not necessary to identify ourselves with the special tendencies of the authors; our aim is to point to at least a few places where the reader may go to inform himself on the matter of confessional obligation in the Lutheran Church. Regarding Germany: H. Mulert, "Die Lehrverpflichtung in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands" (a review of the present ordination vows and forms of obligation for theological professors), 1904. G. Loeber, "Die im evangelischen Deutschland geltenden Ordinationsverpflichtungen, geschichtlich geordnet," 1905; cf. J. L. Neve, in "Introduction to the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church," 1926, pp. 29f. J. O. Evjen, "Lutheran Germany and the Book of Concord," articles in the Lutheran Quarterly, Gettysburg, Pa., 1907, from January to July. The article "Corpus Doctrinae" by H. Heppe, revised by G. Kawerau in PRE, IV. 293ff. Regarding the Scandinavians, see Evjen, "The Scandinavians and the Book of Concord," in Lutheran Quarterly, 1906, April. Regarding America, see the Histories of the Lutheran Church in America by H. E. Jacobs, Geo. Fritschel, J. L. Neve, A. R. Wentz, F. Bente. Compare "The Distinctive Doctrines and Usages of the General Bodies in the United States" (United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia Pa.), C. O. Kraushaar, "Verfassungsformen der Luth. Kirche Amerikas," 1911. See also the article by K. Burger on "Orthodoxie" in the PRE, 14, 495ff, especially the remarks on page 496, beginning with the line 38 quoted in our above-mentioned "Introduction," etc., 1st ed., page 26; 2nd ed., page 35. On confessional obligation compare also R. Seeberg, History of Doctrine, Engl. Edition,

I, p. 21; 3rd German ed., p. 12. (Emphasis upon the distinction between theological form and the tendency to be rejected or affirmed). Also C. M. Jacobs in his inaugural address to the presidency of the Philadelphia Theological Seminary, 1927: "As we read and study them (the Confessions) we have to ask ourselves not simply, Is this truth? but Which is right, this doctrine or its opposite? They do not deal with absolutes, but with alternatives."

In the following discussion of the doctrinal significance of the Augsburg Confession we shall limit ourselves to four theses:

Thesis One

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION MUST NOT BE ISOLATED FROM THE OTHER WRITINGS OF THE BOOK OF CONCORD

All of these cover the religious problems of the same age. There are many groups of Lutherans who accept formally only the Augsburg Confession, and, in addition they use Luther's Small Catechism as a manual for religious instruction. But in the interpretation of these, their theologians work with the whole Book of Concord: with the first commentary of the Confession in Melanchthon's Apology, with Luther's strong testimony in the Smalcald Articles, with the Larger Catechism in its valuable contribution to the Small Catechism. Neither do they really except the Formula of Concord which was written to settle grave questions of post-Reformation days. There is too much real meat and too much real Gospel-preaching in the Formula of Concord to eliminate it from the doctrinally significant confessional literature of the Lutheran Church. All of the Confessions together must be taken as a historical organism of Reformation truth.

A Few Illustrations

To illustrate what we mean by the Confessions as an historical organism we refer (1) to the doctrine of man's natural depravity. It is fundamentally stated in Article 2 of the Augsburg Confession: "Also they teach that since the fall of Adam, all men begotten according to nature are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trusting God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin," etc. But this doctrine which is so much stressed in the Apology (see Art. 2) and in the Smalcald Articles (Part III) is carefully guarded in Article 1 of the Formula of Concord against the teaching of Flacius that original sin is the very "substance" in man. If this teaching were true, man would be like the devil, not redeemable. Yet, our Reformers were decidedly opposed to all minimizing of sin. Article 2 of the Confession closes with the words: "They condemn the Pelagians and others, who deny that the vice of origin is sin and who, to obscure the glory of Christ's merits and benefits, argue that man may be justified before God by his own strength and reason." And why is the recognition of man's natural depravity so necessary? Melanchthon answers in the Apology (Art. 2, 33): "For the magnitude of the grace of Christ cannot be understood unless our diseases be recognized." To this Luther adds the remarkable statement in the Smalcald Articles, Part III, Art. 1, 3: "This hereditary sin is so deep a corruption of nature that no reason can understand it, but it must be believed from the revelation of Scripture." And then, to complete the picture of man's natural depravity, it is asked by all our Confessions without one exception: How has this general

sinful condition of mankind affected our wills? In answering this question we have the great deliveries on Free-Will, first in Luther's interpretation of Art. 3 of the Apostles' Creed, then in Art. 18 of the Augsburg Confession and of the Apology, and finally in Articles 2 and 11 of the Formula of Concord. We see how we would deprive ourselves of the most precious gems in our confessional literature if we should follow the slogan of about thirty years ago in the history of our church in America: "The Augsburg Confession—nothing more, nothing less."[1]

Another illustration of how the Augsburg Confession is a part of an organism may be seen (2) in the careful efforts to relate the act of justification by faith with the fruit of that fundamental experience. Here the Confession, as defended by the Apology, unifies Articles 4 on Justification, 6 on the New Obedience and 20 on Faith and Good Works. On the doctrine of justification Luther says in the Smalcald Articles (Part II, Art. 1): "Of this article nothing can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth and all things should sink to ruin. And upon this article all things depend, which, against the pope, the devil and the whole world, we teach and practice. Therefore, we must be sure concerning this doctrine and not doubt: for otherwise all is lost, and the pope and the devil and all things against us gain the victory and suit." And in the Formula of Concord (Part II, Art. 3) we find these words: "This article concerning justification by faith (as the Apology says) is the chief in the entire Christian doctrine, without which

[1]Our reference is to the statement of the General Synod at the convention in Hagerstown, Md., 1895. See the writer's **Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America,** 2nd ed. 1916, p. 181.

no poor conscience has any firm consolation, or can know aright the riches of the grace of Christ, as Dr. Luther also has written: If only this article remain in view pure, the Christian Church also remains pure, and is harmonious and without all sects; but if it does not remain pure, it is not possible to resist any error or fanatical spirit."

In addition to this article of the Formula of Concord, from which we have been quoting ("Of the Righteousness of Faith before God"), we also refer to Art. 4 ("Of Good Works") which makes valuable contributions to this subject. And even the following articles (5 "Of Law and Gospel," and 6 "Of the Third Use of the Law") can be studied with profit in this connection. All this shows that the Augsburg Confession must not be isolated and separated from the rest of the confessional literature in the Book of Concord.

Similar lines of relationship can be shown (3) in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. In this we compare the texts in the Latin and the German[2] with Luther's Catechism. Our attention is especially attracted by the strong expression of Luther in the Smalcald Articles (Part III, Art. 6, 1).[3] Finally we note the rounded doctrine of the Lutheran Church regarding this sacrament in Art. 7 of the Formula of Concord. Surely our Confessions together represent an organism of truth in legitimate development of the Augsburg Confession. To pick out the Confession and to ignore the others leads to an unhistorical study of Symbolics. It fails to bring out what is really in the Confession itself.

It may be possible, occasionally, to point to a thought in the Formula of Concord that betrays the peculiar conditions and the scholastic traits of the post-Reformation age. But a true historical method of interpretation will take care of such features. There is much less of the objectionable in this latest Confession

[3]Compare our discussion of this situation in our **"Introduction,"** etc.,

[2]The Editio Princeps from which our English translation was made. as quoted, 2nd ed., p. 357f.

than many critics think. They say there were politics and compromise in the shaping of the Formula of Concord. Yes, but were these elements absent in the writing of the Augsburg Confession? (See p. 98). Most of the bodies which mention in their forms of subscription the Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism only, have done it because in these documents the confessional statements are so brief and so simple. They also think that nothing else should be included in the form of confessional subscription than what the layman would also understand. And at certain times in the history of their body there was fear of political trouble if further and larger Confessions should have been introduced. This was the case in several of the Scandinavian lands. However, at the Eisenach World Convention of Lutherans (1923) the Scandinavian representatives declared with emphasis that in their interpretation and practical application of the Augsburg Confession and Small Catechism they aim to work with the whole Book of Concord.

Thesis Two

WITH THE ADOPTION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION THE LUTHERAN CHURCH COMMITS HERSELF TO THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSERVATISM IN ALL THEOLOGICAL PROGRESS

The Lutheran Church is progressive in her theology. Those who deny this do not know her literature. She is not radical, but progressive. At the World Conference of Lutheranism in Copenhagen, Denmark, 1929, the following statements were characteristic as well as representative of Lutheran theology: "The old dogma itself must always again become new among us." (Bishop Ihmels, Dresden, Germany). "Theology must renew itself with the times" (Prof. Moe, Oslow, Norway).[4] Prof. Prochle, Hungary, underscored the demand for

[4]See "Allgemeine Ev. Luth. Kirchenzeitung," Aug. 9, 1929, columns 759, 760. Cf. the protocol of this conference published (United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia, Pa).

progressiveness in Lutheran theology by pointing to the need of "investigating the ultimate foundations of Christianity," adding beautifully: "according to the revelation of God, in the spirit of faith." This would mean: not just naturalistically. He also emphasized the need of Luther research, more than we have done, so that the Lutheran Church may really find herself. She must study the historical past in order to appropriate its abiding values; and she must study the present age in order to arrive at an Apologetic that can meet the problems of the day. But the speaker refused the progressiveness that takes its impulses from the spirit of "idealism" and "pacifism."[5] We add: A church that ignores or opposes a growth and progressiveness such as advocated in this address of the Hungarian professor is stagnant in her theology. And in time even the laymen of such a church will find this out. Progressiveness is not what we in America have come to understand by "Modernism." The latter is established radically upon certain revolutionary principles, ignoring the historical past. The former holds conservatively to what is fundamental in the heritage from the ancient Church as well as from the Reformation, but does not refuse the legitimate results of conservative and devout theological scholarship.

The elements of truth in present day Modernism (wrongly used, however, in so many details of their application) have long been acknowledged in the theological works of the Lutheran Church. We refer to the large literature of the so-called Erlangen School of

[5]Ibdem, p. 761.

Theology.[6] The legitimate tenets of Modernism, or, let us say, its really debatable questions, for instance the conception of revelation as the history of redemption, are surely not new in the theology of the Lutheran Church.[7] There is always danger, of course, for a progressive theology of this kind of sacrificing essential features of evangelical conservatism. Some theologians who started with the Erlangen School, in their grappling with problems, felt themselves driven to occupy positions in part overlapping with those of theological liberalism. There will always be eclectics. But the conservatives of the Erlangen School mean to separate themselves from the camp of "speculative liberalism," which has been fittingly characterized as "a crossing of Schleiermacher's theology with the influences of certain philosophers, resulting in an interpretation of Christianity from the viewpoint of certain philosophical principles."[8] We have mentioned the Erlangen School just as an example of progressiveness in the Lutheran Church. There are other progressive groups which are more cautious and more conservative. But irrespective of schools, a Lutheran who accepts the Augsburg Confession is bound to be conservative. Let us illustrate this in two respects:

[6]To illustrate what is here meant we mention the two fundamental writings of the founder of that school, **J. C. Hofmann, Weissagung und Erfuellung,** 1841-44 (Prophecy and Fulfillment) and **Der Schriftbeweis,** 1852-56 (The Scripture Proof). Both of these epoch making works exist in English translation. To these we may add brief publications of more recent date, such as: **Geschichtliche Offenbarung,** by K. Girgensohn in "Biblische Zeit- und Streitfragen," 1910; **Die Inspiration der Heiligen Schrift,** reprinted from "Pastoralblaetter," 1925; **Das Wesen der Offenbarung im Lichte der neueren Dogmatik** by Bishop Ihmels in "Jahrbuch der Pastoraltheologischen Konferenz fuer Westfalen," 1910.

[7]In England, the Erlangen theology has been represented by men like P. T. Forsyth, J. Orr, A. M. Fairbairn, Bruce and others.

[8]C. Stange, **Dogmatik I,** 1927, p. 230.

1. Conservatism With Regard to the Faith of the Ancient Church

This conservatism is expressed in the manner in which Articles 1 and 3 of the Augsburg Confession adopt the doctrinal heritage of the oecumenical Catholic Church regarding Christology and the Trinitarian relation in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. So long as the Lutheran Church is true to Art. 1 of the Augsburg Confession, she cannot ignore the historical decisions of the Church against Arianism (Christ not "God of very God"), and against the "Samosatenes old and new" (Christ just a man who by influence from God was made "divine"), which in history has been called dynamistic monarchianism and is practically Unitarianism. Nor can she ignore the doctrinal experience of the ancient Church regarding the relation of the divine and the human in Christ as expressed in Art. 3 of the Confession. There are those who object to the Christology of the ancient Church because they see in it speculation on a mystery. But neither this article nor Luther's explanation of Art. 2 of the Catechism nor Art. 8 of the Formula of Concord undertake to define the mystery of the divine and the human in Christ. They simply want to function as friendly guides to both sides, that we may avoid the Scylla as well as the Charybdis; they put no padlock on reverend thought in trying to understand the doctrine of the person of Christ better.[9]

In the doctrine of man's natural depravity also (Art. 2) the Confession is conservative. Pelagianism is rejected. Regeneration is taken as a creative act of God's

[9]Compare the interpretation of Art. 3 of the Augsburg Confession in our "Introduction", etc., 2nd ed., p. 135ff.

Spirit in man's heart. Art. 18 says: "This righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Ghost is received through the word" (sed haec fit in cordibus). This is Augustinian. Of this we shall have more to say in the following consideration. However, we want to say here that the symbolical significance of the Augsburg Confession commits its subscribers to the principle of conservatism.

2. Conservative Regarding Reformation Thought

Thus far we have discussed the heritage from the Ancient Church. But the Lutheran Church, in adopting the Augsburg Confession, recognizes the great experience that came to the Church in the Reformation of the sixteenth century. By this we mean the whole doctrine of Law and Gospel, of sin and repentance and grace through the experience of free forgiveness through justification by faith, in Luther's own brief experience. About this doctrine all the articles of the Confession are grouped. There are the articles on salvation (4, 5, 12, 18, 20, 17), the means of grace (9, 10, 13), and the Church (7, 8, 14, 15). They will give an impression of what is meant by this new experience of the Church in the time of the Reformation. It amounts to a new order of salvation, which is so beautifully popularized in Luther's explanation of the third article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me by his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and

preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith; in which Christian Church he daily forgives abundantly all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and will raise up me and all the dead at the last day, and will grant everlasting life to me and all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true."

3. Among the Objectors to This Heritage We Shall Mention Only Two:

a. Was the Reformation a Mistake?

Among present-day Protestants, especially in the camp of the "World Conference on Faith and Order," there are those who want to apologize for the Reformation. What is moving them to take this position? While the Eastern Orthodox Church and its offshoots have responded to the invitations to participate in the conventions for a general union of all churches of Christendom, the Roman Catholic Church has not yet been induced to participate. Accordingly, some, in their ardent wish for an external union of all Christians have asked themselves whether after all the Reformation was not a mistake. They suggest that had it not developed as a revolution, as it did with Luther and Zwingli, it might have been possible to have neutralized and gradually overcome the special errors of the Roman Catholic system, the result of which might have been a united Christendom. The difference between Germany and the Scandinavian countries is interesting, indeed. In the latter countries the Lutheran Reformation succeeded in winning over the nations in their entirety. Romanism disappeared gradually and altogether. Such gradual permeation of the nations with the Gospel was Luther's ideal. But in

Germany there was a determined opposition among the princes from the beginning (cf. page 23). While much of this broke down, as for instance in Saxony, Brandenburg, yet there followed later the counter-Reformation which brought back the Roman Catholic Church wholly or partly in many parts of Germany and especially in Austria. This development constitutes no charge against the Reformation. What are we to reply to the charge that the Reformation was a mistake? In the first place, history has little interest in "ifs." In divine providence the Reformation came as it did, as a revolution through the powerful influence of Luther and the other great reformers. As a result we have the Augsburg Confession, which has been fittingly called the Magna Charta of this movement. From Wittenberg, that international university (cf. p. 11), the Gospel spread to other countries and produced great Confessions of Faith. We have only one alternative, especially since Rome in the decrees of Trent reestablished herself upon the very principles which the Reformation rejected: Either we must go to Rome or with the Reformation! From a study of her long history we know that Rome will always be the same (semper idem). Her position is not really "catholic." In her present character she represents a very peculiar non-homogeneous development, fundamentally different from the Church of the first five centuries. George Calixtus was too optimistic in judging the Roman Catholic Church.[10]

b. Did the Reformation Come Too Early?

Another objection to the theology of the Reformation

[10]See the writer's book **The Lutherans in the Movements for Church Union,** p. 87; especially pp. 101f.

comes from the camp of Modernism. We are told that the Reformation of the sixteenth century came too early. We should have had the discoveries in the field of the sciences first. And, furthermore, the voice of the new philosophy should have been heard. What are we to say? Again we notice the "if" and repeat what we said before: History has little interest in the "ifs." The fact is, the Reformation came in the sixteenth century. And it surely did come with an inner historical necessity.

What is the charge of Modernism against the Reformation of Luther? We will let a few of the older Modernists speak. Ferdinand Christian von Baur, the head of the old Tuebingen School (died 1860), already criticized Lutheranism as beset with "the transcendental limitations of Roman Catholicism."[11] R. Rothe (d. 1867), in the pursuit of his "Kulturprotestantismus"[12] and E. Troeltsch (d. 1912), the systematician of the Historico-Religious School,[13] as also Dilthy, the famous biographer of Schleiermacher (1912),[14] have spoken in like language. Luther is reproached for his supernaturalism, for his belief in man's natural depravity, for the order of salvation built upon these foundations. The same is charged against Calvin. The Humanists are praised for their "Diesseitigkeitsinteresse." The Arminians, later, were more conservative, but they "widened the sphere of the natural."[15] For the state, ethics was disassociated from religion. Ideas and principles were

[11]Cf. **Baur, Epochen der Kirchlichen Geschichtschreibung,** 1852.
[12]**R. Rothe, Theologische Ethik,** 1854ff.
[13]**E. Troeltsch, Protestantism and Progress,** English ed. 1912.
[14]**W. Dilthy, Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit der Renaissance und Reformation,** 1914.
[15]See Troeltsch in his article on the **"English Moralists"** in the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, etc. This was already a result from the new philosophy of Francis Bacon, Descartes, Herbert of Cherbury, Hobbes, the English Deists and French Naturalists.

developing which aimed gradually to overthrow the theology of the Reformation. It is along this line and in this direction that present-day Modernism is moving.

What are we to answer Modernism in its charge against the Reformation and conservative theology? Lutheranism, in its scientifically theological representatives, does not dream of denying the real verifiable facts of scientific discoveries in the fields of nature. It is true that regarding nature Luther as well as others of the reformers in that age believed things which we cannot believe today. But these were not discussed in the Confessions. Melanchthon, in his organization of university studies in Germany, reveals fine judgment in associating the supernatural with the natural.[16] But he also understood how to separate the two spheres. Occasionally he even reminds us of the way, in which Francis Bacon later in his "Organon" insisted that the boundary lines between "sacred theology" and the "natural theology" of philosophy should not be confused. Much of the warfare against conservatism rests upon mistaken presuppositions. The conservatives, in decided distinction from many of the Modernists, recognize the fact that in religion there is something that lies beyond all that is rational, and that the knowledge of it cannot be exhausted by the methods especially applicable to the exact sciences, because religion appeals to the spiritual something in man which can be expected to be present only in the believer (cf. I Corr. 1 and 2). This does not mean that the Conservatives refuse to participate in scientific methods of investigation in many things pertaining to religion and theology. But they know their limitations when fol-

[16]R. Seeberg, **History of Doctrine,** Engl. Ed., I, 353.

lowing this method in the field of specific religion. The nearer they approach the eternal values of religion, the more they feel that they must follow the testimony of Scripture and welcome as a guide the Confessional experience of the Church in the interpretation of Scripture.[17]

Closing this discussion we wish to say that for the Lutheran Church, on the basis of the Augsburg Confession, there must never come the time when the fundamental ideas of her teaching on the way of salvation, as expressed seminally and popularly in Luther's above-quoted interpretation of the third article of the Apostles' Creed, are exchanged for the naturalistic message of modern Pelagianism!

Thesis Three

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION IS THE SYMBOL OF LUTHERAN IDENTITY

There is a wide variation among the Lutheran groups of different countries relative to the number of Confessions accepted by formal subscription. But of all her particular symbols the Augsburg Confession is best fitted to identify the Lutheran Church doctrinally. No one of the others is suitable for this purpose by itself.

1. Examine the Confessions

Luther's Large Catechism does not fit this purpose. The question may be asked why his Small Catechism could not be used as the creed of Lutheranism? To this the following must be answered: Luther's treatment of the Ten Commandments and his exposition of the

[17]We have quoted from our article on **The Points of Cleavage between Modernism and Conservative Theology** in the "American Lutheran Survey," March 1927, p. 248.

Apostles' Creed belong to the most beautiful gems in the confessional literature of the Church. And what this Catechism offers on the sacraments is even more explicit than what the Augsburg Confession gives on the subject. But it is not the purpose of the Catechism to give a complete expression of the doctrinal character of Lutheranism. Let us refer to several instances of this fact by way of illustration: While the discussion of the Ten Commandments by the Catechism leads us to recognize personal sin, it does not define man's natural depravity as a source of individual sin so carefully as does Article 2 of the Confession. Also, while the teaching of the Catechism on forgiveness of sins is based on the central doctrine of justification yet it does not define the fundamental doctrine of Lutheranism with the clarity of Article 4 of the Confession. Moreover, we do not find statements in the Catechism dealing with the relation between justification and sanctification such as we have in Articles 6 and 20 of the Confession. In its explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed the Catechism expreses itself beautifully on the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Still it does not present formally a doctrine of Church ministry and usages in the way we have this given in Articles 7, 8, 14 and 15 of the Confession. The Catechism makes a wonderful appeal to the heart; but each of the principles of the Confession is an essential pillar under the structure of Lutheranism as an historical church. The Catechism is an unexcelled manual for religious instruction, but it is not a real Confession.

The Apology is a strongly polemical commentary on the Augsburg Confession by its own author, and as such

it has great value. But by itself it cannot be a Confession of the Lutheran Church, especially because Melanchthon confines himself chiefly to the differences with Rome.

The Smalcald Articles of 1537 are a powerful testimony by Luther against Rome supplementary to the Confession of 1530, in points where this document was either silent or too conciliatory. In only a few passing remarks in Part One does it treat of the "chief articles concerning the divine majesty" about which, as Luther says, "there is no contention or dispute since we on both sides confess them." This explains why the Smalcald Articles alone could not be used as the only Confession of Lutheranism. Luther did not aim to give in these a complete expression of the doctrinal character of the Church of the Reformation.

The Formula of Concord is full of valuable confessional statements in matured form, but it aims to deal only with matters of more recent dispute and omits much that had to be discussed in the more fundamental period of the Reformation. It should be remembered that when the Formula of Concord was written the prophetic period of the Reformation was past and the reflective age of theological speculation had begun. A comparison of the Athanasian Creed with the Apostles' Creed shows much of the difference between the Formula of Concord and the Augsburg Confession.

After this comparative review we arrive at the conclusion that the Augsburg Confession is in a special sense the symbol of the Lutheran Church. True, it is a "Gelegenheitschrift" like the other writings in the Book of Concord; but in general rudimentary statements it

gave complete expression to the doctrinal character of Lutheranism. As such it became the model for many Confessions in the Reformed Church.

2. Should the Augsburg Confession Be Replaced By Luther's Writings?

We live in an age of very peculiar observations. In the reconstruction of the Protestant Church in Germany after the World War, Thuringia, the home of Luther, and Wurtemberg, the country of Brenz, reorganized without recognizing the Augsburg Confession. Of course, the individual congregations have this Confession in their old constitutions, but these churches as a whole refuse to inscribe the Augsburg Confession upon their banners.

On the other hand, there are Lutheran theologians who tell us that the Lutheran Church must not tie herself to the Augsburg Confession, but that she must seek her identity through a continued study of Luther's writings. What shall we answer? It is needless to say that the articles of the Augsburg Confession and the further confessional literature which they produced must constantly be enriched by learning what Luther himself wrote, not only in elucidation of the teachings of the Confession, but in adding to the materials with which they deal. Luther left to his church much uncoined gold. We Lutherans in America must become students of our great reformer much more than we have been so far. A continued historical study of Luther's writings should open streams of blessing for our church and make her a blessing for the whole of American Protestantism.

At the same time we know that these writings in themselves cannot take the place of the Augsburg Confession.

A characteristic of all Confessions is their material consistency. But Luther in the wealth of his wonderful originality, could not always afford to be consistent. The constantly changing situation revealed new aspects, of course. But a man so prophetic as was the hero of the Wittenberg Reformation may be expected to have said things at times which he would not say at another time under different circumstances. Furthermore, he was impulsive and endowed with a remarkable ardency of expression, especially at times of conflict or when he was aiming to give utterance to the deepest truths of religion. On such occasions he liked to express the exuberance of his faith in paradox statements. Augustine toward the close of his life wrote a book entitled "Retractions." Luther was temperamentally different from the African bishop. We must also remember that his writings were many. And much in them was published from the manuscripts of copyists. Luther did not see all of the material before it appeared in print. Chief among the problems for a correct interpretation of Luther are the cases where he actually changed his view, and the cases where an experience with certain errorists taught him the need of a complement in the opposite direction.

In discussing the question here under consideration, whether our confessional literature ought to be replaced by the study of Luther's writings, it is interesting to observe also how minds of the most conflicting tendencies have appealed to Luther in his writings. Kant, Lessing, Schiller, Goethe, in their striving for emancipation from traditional authority thought that a proper interpretation

would put Luther on their side. In recent phases of Luther research we have seen that not only the men of confessional Lutheranism (like W. Walther), but also the advocates of a union between the Lutherans and the Reformed appeal to Luther, the latter by refusing to regard the difference of opinion on the Lord's Supper and like matters as essential. A. Ritschl and his pupil Herrmann insisted that Luther was supporting their positions. K. Holl was decidedly opposed to certain findings of Walther. It should not be overlooked that the intense Luther research of the last century has rendered a large contribution to the constant task of a really living church, namely to examine her confessional heritage. It may also be admitted that Melanchthon was not capable of the religious depth that marks the wonderful genius of Luther. See our statement (Ch. IV, 2) about the fitness of Melanchthon for writing the Augsburg Confession. It was impossible for Melanchthon to incorporate the whole wealth of Luther's ideas in that document. But when all this has been admitted, the fact remains that the Church needed a reduction of the fundamental thoughts of Luther's Reformation to tangible statements such as we have in the Augsburg Confession and its explanatory literature. This Confession was needed as a convenient guide for her teachers. Without such a guide the fundamental principles of Lutheranism would have been in danger of gradual evaporation. Not all pastors of our churches can find the time to make themselves intelligent students of Luther's writings in their entirety and in the historical development of his reformatory thought. Therefore it is that the church of his name will always need the Augsburg Confession, the Small Catechism and

the legitimate development of the principles of these two fundamental Confessions in the Formula of Concord as convenient and practical guides and for an orientation as to the doctrinal substance of historical Lutheranism. Even as progressive Lutherans of the 20th century we cannot maintain our identity in a state of abstraction from our Confessional heritage.

Was Luther in entire agreement with the Augsburg Confession? There have been the theologians who have raised this question. It may be admitted that to Luther the Confession as it was delivered at Augsburg was too mild in some places (cf. Ch. VIII),[18] but he never ceased to believe in its teachings. Even towards the close of his life he is reported to have shown his unwavering approval of this Confession by pointing to the "catechisms, tabulae, confessio mea" as expressions of his faith.[19]

3. The Denominational Situation

Guided by our thesis "the Augsburg Confession is the symbol of Lutheran identity" we have tried to make clear that the Augsburg Confession is the special Confession of the Lutheran Church. Dr. F. Pieper, president of the Theological Seminary of the Missouri Synod in St. Louis, Mo., for a popular treatment of this Confession, chose the fitting title "Das Grundbekenntnis." Our fathers, in the seventeenth century, called it the "Augapfel."[20] We have discussed the relation of Luther's writings to the confessional literature of our church. Now we must have a very brief review of the denominational situation.

[18]Cf. page 5, 53 and 99.
[19]On the character of this testimony see Kolde, Introduction to Mueller, XX.
[20]Cf. page 108.

We need to see that the Augsburg Confession marks the Lutheran Church as a distinct church in the family of the denominations. In this study we shall guard ourselves against being guided by divisive interests, the absence of which will be proved by our last, the fourth, thesis, which is to discuss the Augsburg Confession as an expression of Christian catholicity. But the cause of church union is always best served by first looking honestly at the differences, to examine them conscientiously and see whether they can be removed. In the following brief review, however, we must remember that the real and full study of these differences belongs to the department of Comparative Symbolics.

The Denominations

Soon after the beginning of the Reformation Protestantism split into two parts. These are known in history as the Lutheran Church and the Reformed Church. At first the difference was between Luther and Zwingli and his associates (Oecolampad, J. Bullinger *et al.*) On the surface the conflict was about the Lord's Supper. Martin Bucer, leading the Strassburg theologians, attempted to mediate between the two groups. But in conference with Luther, at the Wittenberg Concord (1536), he could not help express his acceptance of a mildly stated Lutheran position. Soon after this he was called to England. The Wittenberg Concord ceased to function because of the opposite convictions of the Swiss theologians. Calvin assumed the heritage of both Zwingli and Bucer and united the whole Reformation influence in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands and England (with Scotland) into a church established chiefly upon his "Institutes."

Through propaganda in Germany the Palatinate, Anhalt, Hesse, Bremen and other sections detached themselves from the Lutheran Church. The Hohenzollern embraced Calvinism without being able, however, to draw their Lutheran subjects after them. In 1817 the two groups formed a union in which the numerically stronger Lutheran type emerged as the leading influence (Prussian Church Union). In some parts of Germany (in the above-mentioned countries and in the Rhine Provinces) the Reformed Church has been maintained in its original Confessional character.

Through immigration all of these churches were established in America so that we have here the Reformed Church of both Dutch and German origin, as also the Presbyterians of different names.[21]

It must also be said that the Baptists, Methodists and Quakers have many features in their theology in common with the Reformed Church group.

It is not easy to classify the Episcopalians and Anglicans. The Congregationalists are rapidly identifying themselves with the Rationalists. (Universalists, "Christians," Unitarians).

Between the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholics, on one side, and the Reformed Church group on the other, the Lutheran Church stands as a distinct group with characteristics of her own. And she occupies this place as the "Church of the Augsburg Confession."

It has been very trying to both the Lutherans and the Reformed churches which have so much in common that they have not been able to form a doctrinal agreement.

[21]At the present time the Reformed of German origin, the Evangelical Church in America and the United Brethren are engaged in effecting a union.

Through the latter part of the sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth century one union movement after another has been attempted, but all efforts were in vain. Because of the protest of the Lutherans the Prussian Union of 1817, which had been announced as an absorbing union, had to be reduced to a mere confederation (1834). The Evangelical Church in America with all the features of an absorptive union is about to disappear in a union with the Reformed.

The Lord's Supper

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries most of the controversy centered in the Lord's Supper and the person of Christ. The doctrine of the Lord's Supper is still an obstacle to union. The indifference to this point in some sections of the Lutheran Church proves nothing to the contrary. Such periods of indifference come and go. Under present conditions in Europe where the borders of the church are fixed, the effect of such indifference is not immediately felt. There the Church can wait until the reaction comes. But under the conditions which we have here in America, in Australia, in the mission fields and in the diaspora, where Lutheranism must maintain itself in the form of free organizations, the above-mentioned feature of the Lutheran Church is one of her characteristics and constitutes a very important inscription upon her flag. As soon as we abandon the truth which we profess in Article 10 of the Augsburg Confession, in "part five" of the Catechism and in Articles 7 and 8 of the Formula of Concord we sacrifice a distinct heritage of the Lutheran Church and begin a journey toward denominational extinction.

The Lutherans of the past were zealous in defending Luther's doctrine on the Lord's Supper. In recent years there has been much silence on this matter. This is natural because it is a difference that has been discussed through the centuries from every possible angle. But what the outstanding Lutheran scholars of this present day, even in Europe, have no idea of abandoning the old Lutheran conception may be seen in recent writings on the subject.

We refer to the following: Prof. E. Sommerlath (Leipzig) in a contribution to the "FESTSCHRIFT" for Bishop Ihmel's seventy-fifth birthday under the title: Luther's Lehre von der Realpraesenz im Abendmahl etc. Compare in the same book W. Laible: "Sind die Aussagen des Kleinen Katechismus Luthers ueber die Sakramente noch haltbar?" See especially Landesbischof Ihmels in an article of the ALLG. EV. LUTH. KIRCHENZEITUNG, No. 20 (Leipzig, May 18, 1928): "Das Lutherische Verstaendnis des Abendmahls." While we are writing we see in this same journal (1929, No. 45-47) a remarkable article by Prof. E. Sommerlath on "Sakrament und Gegenwart," in which he discusses historically and with constant reference to Luther that characteristic realism of the Lutheran Church regarding the means of grace. The author indicates in his contribution to the above-mentioned "Festschrift" that he will soon be ready to offer something comprehensive on this whole subject. (P. S. Even this book we see now announced. It bears the title: "Der Sinn des Abendmahls, nach Luthers Gedanken ueber das Abendmahl," 1527/*29*," 140 pages. Doerffling und Franke, Leipzig). We should also mention the very instructive historical article by W. Elert, Professor in Erlangen, "Wirkungen der Luth. Abendmahlslehre in der Geschichte der Weltanschauung," in "ALLG. EV. LUTH. KCHZ.," numbers 32-34. It is an interesting observation in the History of Christian Thought that the realism of the Lutheran Reformation, after periods of indifference and even antipathy to the idea of a "real presence" in the Lord's Supper, will always reassert itself. It is always an accompaniment of a beginning revival in the Lutheran Church.

OTHER DIFFERENCES: BAPTISM, PREDESTINATION

Why should we limit the difficulty in effecting a union between the Lutherans and the Reformed to the doctrine

of the Lord's Supper and the Christological differences involved in the old controversies when we know that the differences extend to the whole doctrine of the means of grace? The Lutheran teaching on Baptism in Article 9 of the Augsburg Confession, supported by "part four" of the Catechism, is decidedly different from the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism on that subject. This is convincingly shown by Dr. Geo. W. Richards, president of the Reformed Seminary at Lancaster, Pa., in his book "The Heidelberg Catechism" (p. 90). Relative to the general differences on the means of grace we should also read Article 13 of the Augsburg Confession on "The Use of the Sacraments," and Article 5 on the means of grace in general. The thought in all of these articles is that the sacraments are not merely (non modo) marks of difference, but that they are much more (sed magis) signs of God's saving will toward us. In other words, the sacraments are not first of all something that man is doing to mark himself a Christian, but in these sacramental acts, as in the Word to which they belong, God is working upon us for our salvation. This makes for a theology altogether different from the theology of subjectivism in the Reformed churches. It was not difficult to foresee that in time the Reformed churches would abandon Calvin's doctrine of a double predestination which is inconsistent with that subjectivism. The Calvinian type of predestination never received a home-right in the Lutheran Church. Neither is there a place in the Lutheran Confessions for the opposite teaching of Arminianism or synergism, which today has occupied most of the churches in the Reformed group in entire consistence with that subjective conception of the means of grace.

The "Kingdom"

In late years, especially since the famous Stockholm World Conference (1925), renewed emphasis has been placed upon another and a more practical difference between Lutherans and the Reformed group. The Reformed churches, especially those of the Anglo-Saxon type, speak of the "Kingdom" of Christ upon earth in a way that is foreign to the teachings of the Lutheran Church. The object of this "Kingdom" is the realization of ethical perfection on this side of eternity and upon a conquest of the world for Christ. The aim is to arrive at a condition in this world and in the life of the state where Christ is recognized as Lord, when His will is done and when the forces of evil are subdued and placed under control. For the realization of this condition the government must aid and execute the moral program of the Church. Much is expected of all the governments of the earth in cooperation for the realization of this Kingdom of Christ. We are told that it is to come through a "new democracy and a new economic order." At a convention one of the leading churches of the Reformed group petitioned President Wilson (1912) to recognize the republic of China. The idea according to which governments are expected to execute the moral demands of the Church is expressed in the theologies of both Zwingil and Calvin. (John Knox took this idea with him back to Scotland and made it the corner stone of his reformation. His genius in this respect is seen in the strictest of his followers in this country, the "Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America," known as the "Covenanter Church" (Old Light). See vol. II of the "Religious Bodies" in the United States Census,

1916, p. 606. Cf. E. O. Watson, Year Book of the Churches, 1923, p. 186).

The Lutheran Church is following a very different line of thought. She is convinced that the order of this present sinful and passing world which "lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19) is unavoidably different from the order of God's eternal kingdom and that this world is not destined, by our changing the natural order, to become the kingdom of God upon earth. Even if we succeed in developing and improving morally the conditions of this world we are thereby not making this world the "Kingdom of God." True, we pray and work for the "coming" of the kingdom as we are told to do in the Lord's Prayer. But we know that Christ's kingdom "is not of this world" (John 18:36) and that He says (Luke 17:21) "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you." The true program for the coming of the kingdom is to work for regeneration in the hearts of men by the power of the Holy Spirit through the means of grace (A. C., Art. 5). This is the slow process of the leaven in the meal. The work is through the ministry of the Gospel, through spiritual invitation; not through the enactment of "blue laws." The Lutheran Church has a way entirely different from the Reformed group of churches in considering the relation between Church and State. Art. 16 of the Augsburg Confession on "Civil Affairs," in the manner in which it speaks of the functions of the government, expresses the independency of the State from the Church. To be sure, the government has the God-given duty to protect society against the outbreaks of evil (Romans 13). Relative to "punishments," "wars," etc., care must be taken that all actions be "just"

(Art. 16). But in all these matters the state is independent of the Church, not under her control.

We have been considering, in this third thesis, the Augsburg Confession as the symbol of Lutheran identity. It is in a special sense a bond of union between the Lutheran churches. While this is true there is in this Confession also a note of Christian catholicity. To this we shall devote ourselves briefly in a last thesis.

Thesis Four

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION IS AN EXPRESSION OF CHRISTIAN CATHOLICITY

Among the large literature on this subject we refer first to a real gem, namely the paper of Dr. F. H. Knubel, President of the United Lutheran Church in America: "That They All Might Be One," an exegesis with conclusions, read at the World Convention of Lutherans at Eisenach, Germany, August, 1923. Published in English and German Lutheran periodicals, also in pamphlet form. We also mention two articles which appeared in the ALLG. EV. LUTH. KIRCHENZEITUNG, Leipzig, 1920, Nos. 20-22. The one was by F. Meyer, "Was koennen wir aus Art. VII und VIII der Augustana fuer die Gegenwart lernen?" 1920, pages 20-22. The author of the other was W. Elert-Erlangen, "Die Botschaft des VII Artikels der Augsburgischen Konfession," 1927, No. 43-46. Many books on this subject have been issued under the auspices of the World Conference on Faith and Order. Among these we mention the book "Can the Churches Unite?" 1927, preparatory to the Conference at Lausanne. Entirely too much of the literature of this day is written in a spirit of doctrinal indifferentism. Union is to be brought about at any price.

1. The Augsburg Confession Is a Catholic Document

This we have shown on page 98. Luther never withdrew from the Church of his day. He was fundamentally opposed to sectarianism. In his reformation he was always conservative, removing only what was clearly

against Scripture and preserving all legitimate historical development in practice as well as in doctrine.

He took over the ecumenical creeds of Christendom, as we have seen.[22] The Augsburg Confession refers to the Nicene and the Apostles' Creeds as documents of authority (cf. Art. 1 and 3). Luther regarded even the Athanasian Creed with its Chalcedonean Christology concerning the two natures of Christ and the relation of these to each other so highly that he wrote: "It has been composed in such a way that I do not know whether anything more important and glorious has been written since the time of the Apostles."[23] We can trace Luther's doctrine on the personal union of the two natures in Christ all through Art. 3 of the Augsburg Confession. There are two natures, the divine and the human, inseparably conjoined in one person, one Christ true God true man. It was a Godman that Christ was born, that He suffered, was crucified, and it was He as Godman (idem), who descended, rose again and ascended. The same Christ (idem) shall return.

The Lutheran Reformation also took over the heritage from Augustine regarding man's natural depravity (Art. 2) and the effect from this condition upon man's will in rebus spiritualibus (Art. 18). Touching the salvation of man, however, the Augsburg Confession made statements in Articles 4 and 6 which avoided the Augustinian identification of justification and sanctification. Here the Lutheran reformation reinterpreted the Apostle Paul and established a relation between justification and sanctification that secured for the troubled sinner the full

[22]Thesis two, p. 116f.
[23]Cf. Erl. Ed. 23, p. 251ff.

Gospel of the certainty of his salvation that lies in the teaching of an unconditional forgiveness and of an imputation of the righteousness of Christ (the sola gratia i. e., "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling").

Luther's conservatism in matters of practice is well illustrated by the manner in which he preserved all the liturgical treasures of the past. Because of her conservative trait in forms of worship, the Lutheran Church has been accused through the centuries of representing a half-way reformation. This accusation is wrong because the criterion of the true reformation lies in a church's care to safeguard the teaching of the Gospel and to keep it free from all work-righteousness. The forms of the Lutheran Church aim to make the preaching of the Gospel impressive. The before-mentioned age-long accusation of a "half-way reformation" is simply an expression of the general conviction that the Lutheran Church developed as a conservative church, that is as a truly Catholic Church in doctrine and practice.

2. The Message of Art. VII of the Augsburg Confession

a. Relation Between the One Church and the Many Churches

In our third thesis we have spoken of the denominations of Christendom. We made the statement that the Augsburg Confession is in a special sense the symbol of Lutheranism. But this Confession is at the same time and really first of all an expression of Christian Catholicity. Its Article VII of the Church offers a special

message on this subject. This Article does not speak of "denominations," but of "one holy church" which "will continue forever." Luther struggled hard to secure a development of the Reformation in which the church would remain One, and where there would be no denominations, no sects. It was to his great disappointment that in Germany a considerable part of the church refused to open its doors to the Gospel. He had hoped for a development such as took place in the Scandinavian countries where the Roman Catholic Church accepted the Reformation. It also belonged to the hardest experiences of Luther to find that concerning the Lord's Supper there were different conceptions among the Protestants as forebodings of schism and denominationalism. But all this did not hinder our confessors at Augsburg in the year of 1530 to state their Art. VII as follows:

"Also they teach, that One holy church is to continue forever. The church is the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered. And to the true unity of the church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. Eph. 4: 5-6."

We note here the careful distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals. It is for the purpose of safeguarding the unity of the church. The One holy Church, the Una Sancta, must not be split into denominations and sects by insisting that "human traditions, rites, or ceremonies, instituted by men should be everywhere alike."[24]

[24]This thought is taken up for special discussion in Art. 15 "Of Rites and Usages." Compare our discussion of this article in our **Introduction to the Symbolical Books,** much revised in the 2nd ed., pp. 255ff.

b. A Very Significant Characterization of the Church

Our aim here is not to give a complete doctrine of the Church. The discussion is on the symbolical significance of the Augsburg Confession. We have seen that this Confession expresses the historical traits of Lutheranism. But the Lutherans at Augsburg did not want to be just a denomination, one church among many, they wanted to be part of the One, Holy, Catholic Church. They were pleading with their opponents to the right and to the left to be with them this "One holy Church," which is the "congregation of the saints and true believers" (Articles VII and VIII). But while dismissing as conditions for Church unity the non-essentials, they could not pass by another very significant characterization of the Church. They described her as "the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered."

The right teaching of the Gospel and the right administration of the sacraments are indispensable marks of the One Christian Church. This is the statement, and the sentence is adjoined: "To the true unity of the church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments."

There will be good Christians in other churches, and also among Lutherans, who cannot understand why in addition to the Gospel the sacraments are always mentioned.[25] That difficulty will immediately disappear when we remember that to the Lutheran reformers both sacraments were not just coordinate parts with the Word or Gospel but the Gospel itself, yea, even the culmination

[25]Two times in this article, see also Art. V.

of the Gospel. As in the Gospel preached so God offers and communicates in the sacraments His grace, as an assurance of salvation.

c. That Twice Employed "Rightly"

Note in the above quoted statement of our article the emphasis upon the term "rightly." The church is the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is RIGHTLY taught and the sacraments RIGHTLY administered. "Our English text is a translation from the Latin Editio Princeps: Est antem ecclesia congregatio sanctoram in qua evangelium RECTE docetur and RECTE administrantur sacramenta. The German text reads: Bei welchen das Evangelium REIN gepredigt und die Sakramente LAUT DES EVANGELII GEREICHT WERDEN." In the Apology we find the words: "And we know that the church is with those who teach the Word of God aright, and administer the sacraments aright."[26]

We see that there was intention in the choice of these constantly recurring adverbs. This "rightly" was not just a slip of Melanchthon's pen. We are even able to prove that this word was not in the first drafts, but that it was added later, shortly before the delivery of the Confession.[27] Thus the term "rightly" (recte) is like a postscript to a letter. Postscripts are always meant seriously, otherwise they would not be added. There may have been much struggle in the souls of our fathers in those days preceding the public delivery of the Confession before they decided to employ this most significant phrase. It comes in at a point where there is the notice-

[26] **Book of Concord, People's Edition,** p. 217.
[27] Kolde, **Die aelteste uns bekannte Redaktion der Augsb. Konfession,** p. 51; see in this book p ...

able step from the One Catholic Church to the same church in its empiric existence.

d. How Is This Phrase to Be Interpreted?

How can it be harmonized with the preceding statement of the article? If the real church is limited to the "congregation of saints where the Gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered," is not the Church as the "One holy church" then sacrificed? It is of greatest importance that we guard against an interpretation of this sentence which would admit the two churches side by side: an invisible church universal and a visible church of the denominations. The Lutheran Reformers did not speak of a "visible" and an "invisible" church. This was a distinction that was used by Zwingli and in substance also by Calvin. It is true that the Lutheran dogmaticians later did accommodate themselves to the use of these terms, but they did it with careful qualifications taking the invisibility as indistinctivility. It is one and the same church, as body and soul are one.[28] If we want to answer the question above, whether the twice-employed "rightly" does not sacrifice the idea of the One holy church, we must keep two things in mind:

First: Our article speaks of the "Gospel" in the Scriptures. This surely includes the Law because it is on the background of God's holy Law which convicts man as a sinner that the promise of grace in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the Savior stands out as the only anchor of hope for souls suffering under the burden of guilt. And, as mentioned above, the sacraments are not only part of

[28]See in our **"Introduction,"** etc., the interpretation of Art. 8, pp. 190f.

that Gospel, but its culmination, the seal of it for the full assurance of salvation. It is this "Gospel" that must be taught "rightly" and be kept "pure" in the One holy Christian Church. What did Melanchthon mean by "Gospel"?

The following quotation from the Apology shows that Melanchthon, in speaking of the "Gospel," was not thinking of a special system of theology: "And we add the mark: 'the pure doctrine of the Gospel, and the sacraments.' And this Church is properly the pillar of truth (1 Timothy 3 :15). For it retains the pure Gospel, and as Paul says (1 Cor. 3:12) 'the foundation,' i. e. the TRUE knowledge of Christ and faith. Although among these (German text: 'in the body which is built upon the true foundation, i. e. upon Christ and faith'), there are also many weak persons, who upon the foundation build stubble that will perish, i. e. certain unprofitable opinions (German text: 'some human thoughts and opinions') which, nevertheless, because they do not overthrow the foundation, are both forgiven them and also corrected. And the writings of the holy fathers testify that sometimes even they built stubble upon the foundation, but that this did not overthrow their faith."[29]

SECOND: We must remember that purity in the teaching of the Gospel constitutes an ideal, a goal to which all the churches of Christendom must attain more and more. The empiric churches are "the One holy Church" ONLY IN SO FAR as (quatenus) they succeed in teaching the "Gospel" "rightly," that is in its purity.

The substance of Article 7 puts all churches under the

[29] **Book of Concord, People's Edition,** p. 165, 20. For a larger discussion of the problems here involved, cf. our **Introd. to Symb. Books,** 2nd ed., pp. 187-91, also **"Lutherans in Movements for Union",** pp. 149-62.

judgment of God, not excepting our own church. How does the Lutheran Church fare in such a judgment?

Our Confessions are scriptural. They do teach the Gospel rightly, and they speak of the sacraments as real Gospel. But to what extent do our churches of today succeed in appropriating the many Gospel notes in their Confessions and in the writings of their great reformer? We cannot be expected to preach the Confessions, of course. Every age has its own special problems and demands its own language. But we know only too well that there are those in our pulpits in all lands today who have become victims of the temptation to level or lower their message so that it will conform to all the modern tendencies which, in principle, eliminate the old Gospel of grace and aim to replace it by a false Gospel of auto-redemption. The ways of adulterating the Gospel are so many.[30]

As to the other churches, we cannot take back the criticism expressed under Thesis Three of our discussion. And here we would add that some of the things which their Confessions have been stressing against the Lutheran Church do affect the purity of the Gospel. We think of their conception of the sacraments, of their ideas about the "kingdom," of the legalism resulting from their conception of the Scriptures, etc. At the same time we would say that there is much real, true Gospel in their Confessions. The Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession, the Book of Common Prayer, all are beautiful illustrations of this fact.

Here, however, as with regard to the Lutheran Con-

[30]We refer to the remarks in our oft-quoted **"Introduction"**, etc., p. 185.

fession, the question is raised: What is the preaching in these churches today? Again we must speak of the purity of the Gospel as a goal and an ideal. Many pulpits have been yielding to a Modernism that dismisses the Gospel. And because of the subjectivism and aversion against conservatism the yielding has been much greater in other denominations than in the Lutheran Church. But many churches and pastors and teachers in all these churches are standing out as faithful witnesses with pen and voice against veritable tides of influences that are shaking the foundations of historic Christendom.

"The church is the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered." Measured by this test, there are many religious organizations, claiming to be a part of the One holy Church, where we can hardly see anything of these marks. And still, might it not be possible that even here there may be at least a remnant of the Gospel, not "rightly" taught from the pulpit, it is true, but beautifully supplemented in the services by the Scriptures that are read, by parts of a liturgy that is used, or by the hymns that are sung? Thus even here we would refrain from saying that there is nothing of the "One holy Church." We ask the reader to turn once more to the above-quoted paragraph from the Apology on the Augsburg Confession. Closing we repeat this last thesis: Our Confession is an expression of Christian Catholicity!

IN CONCLUSION: SURELY, THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION IS MORE THAN JUST AN ANTIQUE

The historical significance of the Confessions for this present day is not to be denied, of course. Even the Formula of Concord declares in its Introduction that the "symbols and writings cited are not judges as are the Holy Scriptures, but only witnesses and declaration of faith, as to how at any time the Holy Scriptures have been understood and explained in the articles of controversy in the Church of God by those who then lived, and how the opposite dogma was rejected and condemned."[1] This meant that the way for further development was to be left open. Such development was bound to come through the added experiences since the Reformation in the struggle with new problems, with new errors and by passing through new religious crises.

Still, in confessional obligation there is something that Lutherans must be ready to reject and something that they must be willing to accept. What is it? We are told that confessional subscription does not include assent to the theological form of the Confessions, because the theological form is accidental and will change with the times. And then it is said that two things are subscribed to: (1) the rejection of a certain position or doctrine; (2) the affirmation of the religious tendency which excludes this doctrine. If we should accept this

[1]Jacobs, People's Ed., p. 492.

very broad definition of confessional subscription and apply it to the Augsburg Confession then there would be at least this much of a permanent significance in this document, namely the religious tendency which excludes the opposite position or doctrine. It would justify our above statement that the Augsburg Confession is not just an antique.

Not all Lutherans, however, would accept this just quoted meaning of confessional subscription. Many would insist that the things to be accepted cannot always be separated from the theological form. They would speak of a "confessional substance" that should be accepted. To clear up the situation let us ask just a few serious questions: Could the Lutheran Church treat as open questions the theological form of Art. I of the Augsburg Confession with its supplementary statements to the Nicene Creed? Are not the phrases in Art. II regarding man's natural depravity all very important for the Lutheran doctrine of grace? We refer especially to the anti-Pelagian thought that sin is first of all a sinful condition. Regarding Art. III, on the person of Christ, do we not feel that the very expression of the incarnation and on the union of the two natures in the Godman are inseparable from a Christology that is characteristic of the historic Lutheran Church? In Art. IV, would the Lutheran want to be without the very language of that phrase "freely justified for Christ's sake through faith"? In Art. V, will not this following phrase always strike us as born out of the heart of the Lutheran Reformation: "For through the Word and the Sacraments as through instruments the Holy Ghost is given where and when it pleases God in them that hear the Gospel"? Have not

statements such as the following become veritable parts of our Lutheran consciousness: In Art. VI, "that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruits, and that it is necessary to do good works, commanded by God;" in Art. VII: "The Church is the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered;" in Art. IX that "baptism is necessary to salvation;" in Art. X of the Lord's Supper, the "truly present;" in Art. XII that beautiful definition of repentance. And so forth. Forms of expression that have grown out of very pressing historical situations often have permanent significance—in any kind of literature. Occasionally it is a certain form that coins the meaning of a confessional thought. It keeps the mere idea or tendency from assimilating heterogeneous elements and so to lose its historical meaning.[2]

It is considerations like these that confront us with the question as to the meaning of the Augsburg Confession for this present day. When we spoke, above, of the historical significance of the Confessions we referred to a statement in the Formula of Concord. We shall now add that other statement of the Formula Concordiae where it says that the Confessions are "accepted" as "a unanimously received, definite, common form of doctrine, which our evangelical churches together and in common confess."[3] In a proper appreciation of the Augsburg Confession the two things go together: The Augsburg Confession was an expression of faith "by those who then lived." But its principles, frequently in the verbis

[2]On this whole subject there was a very interesting article by Lic. Dr. Stier in the **Allg. Ev. Luth. Kirchenzeitung,** Leipzig, April 28, 1911. A review of its content is given in our "Introduction to the Symbolical Books," 2nd ed., 37f.

[3]Jacobs, People's Ed., p. 537.

ipsissimis of their historic form, in short its confessional substance, have a meaning for the Lutheran Church of today. By reason of our experiences since the Reformation we know more than did our fathers at Augsburg, but even this our development has been upon the shoulders of our fathers.

Surely, the Augsburg Confession is not just an antique.

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